BING

APRIL 1994

No. 106

THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

Founded 1950

MANAGEMENT TEAM

Hon Secretary & Treasurer	MICHAEL CRAMPTON	19 Carrholm Crescent Chapel Allerton Leeds LS7 2NL Tel: 0532 689556
Magazine Editor	MALCOLM MACFARLANE	1 Hulme Hall Avenue Cheadle Hulme Cheadle Cheshire SK8 6LN Tel: 061 485 2782
Publishing & Distribution	JOHN JOYCE	Ravenswood House Chowdene Bank Low Fell Gateshead NE9 6JP Tel: 091 487 8761
U.S. Representative	F.B. (Wig) WIGGINS	5608 North 34th St. Arlington, Virginia 22207 U.S.A. (703) 241-5608
Australian Representative	DAVID CURRINGTON	1 Ivy Street Greenacre, NSW Australia 2190
Records	DEREK PARKES	66 Firs Road Firsdown, Salisbury Wilts SP5 1SW Tel: 0980 862688
Films	KEITH PARKINSON	'Meadowcroft' Houghtons Lane Eccleston St. Helens WA10 5LD Tel: 0744 22248
Radio and TV	LIONEL PAIRPOINT	86 Ellesmere Avenue Mill Hill London NW7 3HD
Photographs	RON BOSLEY	10 Fountains Avenue Simonstone Near Burnley Lancashire BB12 7PY Tel: 0282 779924

Our cover photograph shows Bing getting help with his make-up from Beatrice Lillie on the set of 'DOCTOR RHYTHM'. Thanks to Don and Peter Haizelden for the loan of the photograph.

CONTENTS

	Page Nos.
Editorial	2
Secretary/Treasurer's Report	3
A Crosby Christmas	5
Rosemary Salutes Bing At Carnegie Hall	7
The Return Of The Prodigal Son	10
Letter From Leslie	10
Bing Swings On An Asteroid	11
Rhythm On Record	12
Trading Post	14
The Crosby Collection — Part 3	15
Celluloid Crosby	16
Hooray For Hollywood!	19
One Sweet Letter From You	22
D-Day, 6th June 1944	26
Lionel's Lines	29
A Man and His Dream	32
Once In a While	34
Perry Como's Irish Christmas	34
Bert Bishop's Bing On The Box	37
Bing Crosby: His Legendary Years	40
Bing's Lost 78s	44
Derek Parkes' Crosby Collectors Club	45

Membership renewals fall due on 1 January on each year, and should be sent, together with remittance to Michael Crampton at the address shown opposite. Subscription rates effective 1 January 1994 are:

UK	£7.00 per annum
Europe, inc Eire	£8.00 per annum
USA & Canada	$20 per annum
Australia	A$30 per annum
New Zealand & South America	£11.50 per annum

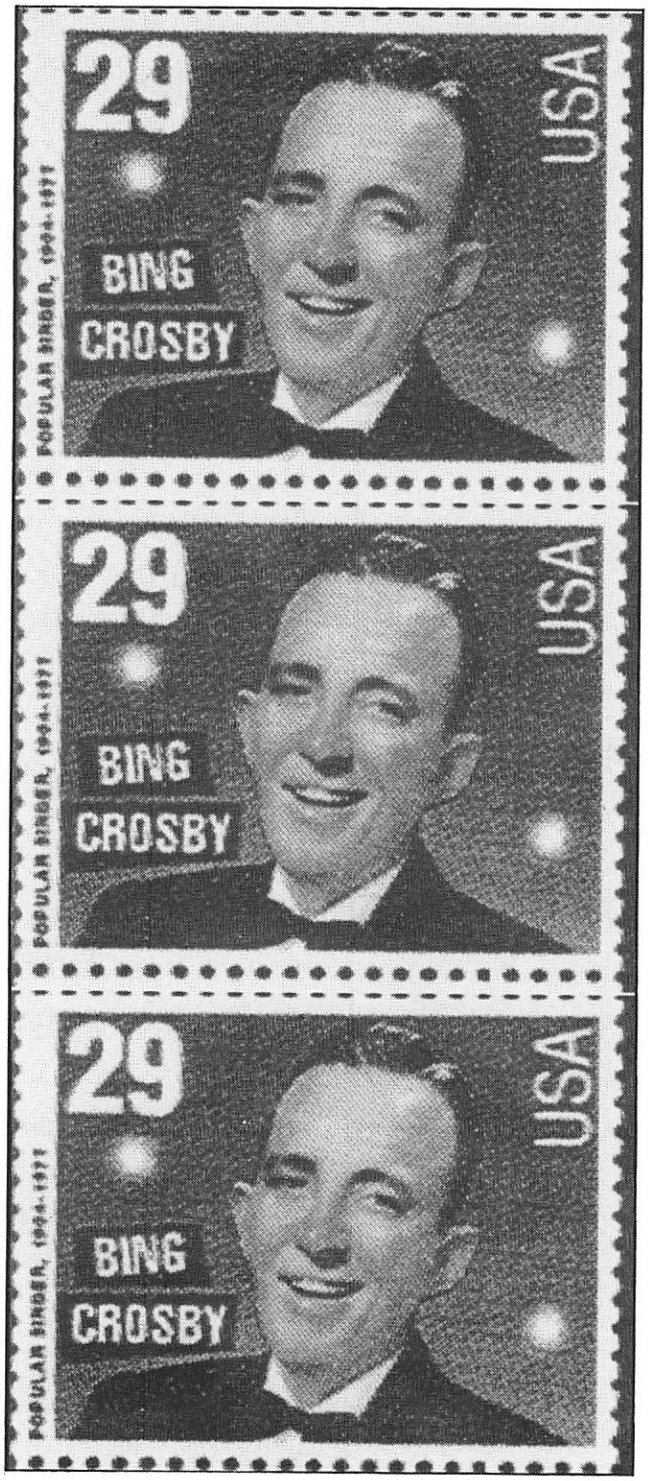
All remittances should be paid in £ sterling, payable to "Michael Crampton — ICC" with the exception of U.S. and Canadian members who should send their remittance in U.S. dollars to F. Wiggins and Australian members who should pay David Currington. For addresses see inside front cover.
All articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to Malcolm Macfarlane.
Any other correspondence concerning membership or other aspects of club affairs should be sent to Michael Crampton.

BING is the official journal of the International Crosby Circle and is published in April, August and December of each year.

Opinions expressed in articles are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the ICC. All original material c ICC 1994.

EDITORIAL

So at last the USA authorities are to issue a Bing Crosby stamp! At the unveiling of the 1994 United States stamp program on December 7, we learned that "five 20th. century popular singers who performed at clubs, on stage and in concerts and movies are featured on one pane of 20 stamps. The pop singers include Al Jolson, Bing Crosby, Ethel Waters, Nat King Cole and Ethel Merman." Well it's not quite how we would have announced it but it'll have to do. The stamps will be for 29 cents each and will be issued in September. The bad news is that there will not be a separate sheet of stamps for each entertainer and it will cost $5.80 for each sheet of 20 stamps in order to get 4 copies of the stamp honouring Bing. Mark Scrimger kindly sent us a blown up photocopy of the Bing stamp and he put three together to creat the nice effect seen. Hopefully some of our American members will work out some way to offer the Bing stamps to those of us outside the USA nearer the time.



I continue to be amazed at the activity on the Bing scene. Post floods in to me with cuttings from newspapers, details of TV programmes, shows in honour of Bing, articles, letters and so on. It gives me quite a problem in deciding what to put in the magazine and what to leave out but long may it all continue. This edition carries reviews of important Bing related concerts by Rosemary Clooney, Perry Como and Gary Crosby. A tremendous amount of favourable publicity has been generated about the MCA 4-CD set "Bing — His Legendary Years" and we reproduce some of this. George O'Reilly's CD "A Little Bit of Irish" has proved universally popular and is now available on cassette as well from Derek Parkes. Our regular contributors have again sent in wonderful articles and a feast awaits you.

The sad death of Ken Twiss of the Bing Crosby Historical Society reached us as the last magazine was being printed and a nice tribute by Bill Osborn will be found later on in this issue. We are aware that many members of the Bing Crosby Historical Society have joined us in recent months and we welcome them all. You are amongst friends.

Finally, my apologies if this edition has reached you slightly later than usual. A few gremlins crept into the last BING (including a page being out of order) and to avoid a repetition of this, I have asked to see a final proof (in addition to the first proof) before the magazine is printed. This will inevitably delay matters for a week or so but I hope that the wait will be worth it.

Malcolm Macfarlane

SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT

Greetings, warmest greetings to all members of the ICC and once again it is a pleasure and delight for me to report a successful year for the club. Much new material has become available to members and the year ended on a high note with the appearance of the MCA 4 CD set, the release of 'A Little Bit of Irish' and the publication of Fred Reynolds' third 'Crosby Collection'. We continued to attract new members and now have a secure financial position which will allow our work to continue in the year ahead. May I congratulate members for their loyal support and enthusiasm.

Some fine and original material has appeared in BING and has been received with great interest by readers and many are keen to get the next instalments, so that their knowledge of Bing's career is further extended. We aim to please and hope to continue to merit your approval.

April is the time of year when I get the opportunity to thank all members of the team for their dedicated support and for me it is a great pleasure to record our indebtedness to:-

Ron, John, Malcolm, Lionel, Derek, Keith, David & Wig.

WELL DONE gentlemen and long may you combine your talents to bring BING to your very appreciative readers.

NEW MEMBERS

Bing's admirers continue to find us via CD sleeves, members recommendations and the sterling effort of our publicists Leslie Gaylor and Stan White and thus we are delighted to welcome from:

ENGLAND

David Atling (Essex), Bernard Burke (Lincoln), Bill Molyneux (South Wirral), Charles Davey (Berks.), Gillian Walsh (London), Mr A J Vernon (Devon), Paul Barnes (Norfolk), Len Caddington (Wilts).

IRELAND

Robert Larkin (Tralee)

NORTH AMERICA

Upwards of 30 new members join us for this issue of BING and once again the ICC is eternally grateful to Wig for his industry and enthusiasm in introducing these great guys to our Circle. Names were not just to hand as I write so they will be featured in August.

AUSTRALIA

Colin Gillies (Cardiff NSW)

SWEDEN

Stefan Cardner of Nacka is a most enthusiastic admirer of Bing and he rejoins us after a decade 'out in the wilderness'. Stefan is our third Swedish member and we hope that he will join Ragnar Uppman and Rude Edvardson in seeking to promote an increased ICC membership in his wonderful country. Welcome and good luck to Stefan.

DONATIONS

Success for the ICC means having a dedicated membership who contribute their basic subscription, a loyal band of writers who provide interesting and original features for inclusion in BING and amongst the subscribers are members who always give generous support by way of a donation to club funds.

We salute our benefactors and gratefully acknowledge donations from:-

Starline Tours, Geoff Probert, Bill Huntington, Roger Addey, Ken Deakon, Dave Spong, Matthew Sprott, Brian Lewis, Goronwy Owen, John Combes, Robert Minns, Bill Emery, Brian Ford, Jack Hobday, Wally Oldfield, Don Bostock, Peter Carpenter, Sylvia Crellin, A D Fisher, Des Hellier, A C Smith, John Tasker, John Cable, John Stiles, Ian Arnott, George Bailie, Ron Gould, J Riley, Alf Peyton, Arnold Pope, Ron Chaplin, Larry Farrell, Leslie Gaylor, Roy Irvine, Mike Mansley, Ken Heason, Tom Hughes, Tom Matthews, Ron Holder, Margaret North, John McVicar, Lionel Pairpoint, Thomas Mooney, Oisin Andrew, Harry Ross, Joe Forster, Ted Burnell, Alf Mutter, John Ford, Len Nuttall, George Patmore, Maurice Beardmore, Rab MacLaren, R W Hollis, Frans Van Der Kolff, Etty Gitts, Ragnar Uppman.

A truly magnificent list of contributors who can be proud of their generous support for the ICC.

DEATHS

It is with great sadness that I draw members attention to the deaths of **Ken Twiss, Joe Lawrence, Mary Throp and Jack Feather.**

Ken's contribution to Crosbyana is well known and a tribute will appear elsewhere in this issue. Corresponding with Ken was always a pleasure and we can be eternally grateful that he pioneered the idea of the BCHS, the artefacts of which now repose in the library at Gonzaga. Maybe someday, our collections will be placed in the care of this fine University as our tribute to Ken.

Joe was a great admirer of Bing and he cherished his involvement with the ICC. We are consoled to learn from Mrs Lawrence that Joe derived great satisfaction from listening to the tapes he bought from the club and that he spent hours enjoying his hobby and favourite singer.

Mary was special, a kind helpful person who had time for others and it was Mary who encouraged your secretary to join the then British Crosby Society in November 1957. Mary and her husband Jim were much involved in the early Leeds meetings and their

help and kindness down the years was truly appreciated. Mary's death was sudden and left so many in a great state of shock and she will be greatly missed.

Jack too, was a great supporter of the Leeds meetings and his jovial personality enlivened many of our gatherings, especially at my Mum's house at Whinmoor in Leeds. Jack's drawings did grace the front pages of the club's magazine and it is sad that our Keighley supporters are diminished once again by Jack's passing.

Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to the various families and friends.

MEMBERSHIP FILE

Way back in 1961, Frank Murphy published the only known listing of members that your secretary is aware of. This file contained 158 names and twenty of those listed are still members of the club today. Support for a new listing is strong and we will publish the booklet later in the year. With luck the file will contain over 500 names.

It is very important that members let me know if they don't wish to be included in the booklet and to date only five have declined my invitation. We will assume we have your permission to include your name if we do not learn to the contrary.

THE EMERALD ISLE

George O'Reilly, Michael O'Toole and Frank Brannigan are warm hearted generous souls who made the visit to Dublin by Ken Crossland, Malcolm Macfarlane and myself, truly memorable.

Meeting Perry Como, seeing his television recording and sharing the weekend with great and knowledgeable collectors like, George, Michael and Frank will be an experience your secretary will never forget. There is vast knowledge of Bing's work amongst our members but these three will be hard to top and if they come to Leeds and enter the quiz they will walk away with the prizes.

'A Little Bit of Irish' is being acclaimed as one of the best produced recordings of Bing, ever, and I do urge members to support this important project by buying at least two copies of the CD and Tape. The production is excellent and we can help George recover his large outlay by being generous with our support.

Finally I would like to thank all members who write with words of encouragement and support and ask you to spare a thought for those who are going through a difficult patch, including **Yvonne Bowles** who experienced a burglary recently and lost her Bing CDs, falling and breaking some bones soon after!, **Charlie Tupper, Don Small, Arnold Baker, Evelyn Flear and Albert Rayment** who needed medical or hospital treatment. We wish all a speedy return to good health.

Michael Crampton

INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR 12 MONTHS TO 31st DECEMBER 1993

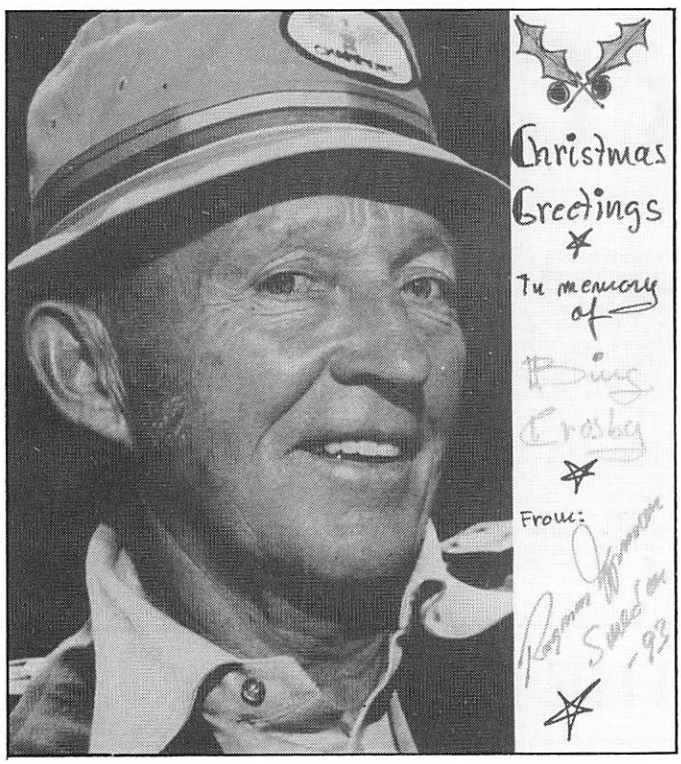
Income	£	**Expenditure**	£
Subscriptions	3481	Printing BING	2062
		Posting BING	1200
Donations:		**Expenses**	
Individual	258	Secretarial	323
ICC tapes	231	Publicity	120
Fred Dolby	75	Editorial	40
Starline	50	AGM	24
	4095		3769
Balance at 31.12.1992	4235	Balance at 31.12.93	4607
Interest 1993	46		
	8376		8376

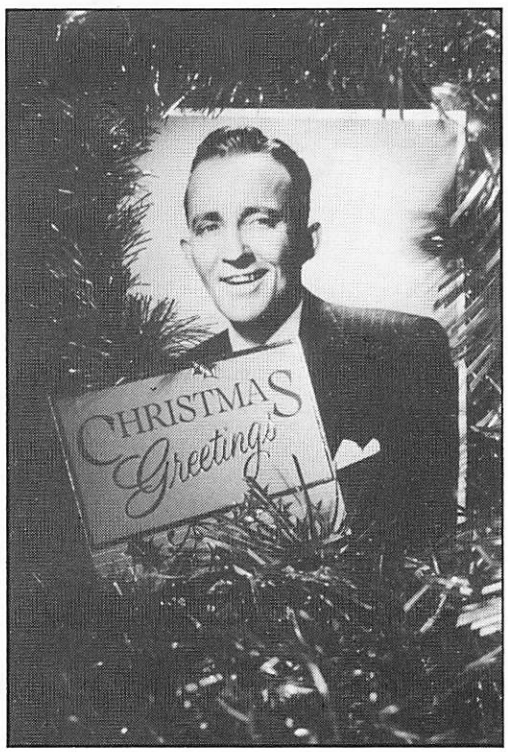
NOTE: Members should note that the cost of posting BING rose by 27% during the year.

A CROSBY CHRISTMAS

Most of us have completely forgotten last Christmas by now but it is worth recording how prominent Bing's image and voice were in December 1993 (the 90th Christmas since his birth!) Bert Bishop will list the films shown in his section but even he will not be able to note all of the Bing recordings heard on radio. Every shop seemed to have at least one Bing item being played regularly (usually White Christmas) and one bank with which I am closely associated had a very nice cassette of Christmas songs featuring Bing very frequently played in its banking hall throughout Christmas week. Even my Kellogg's Cornflakes packet had a feature on the song White Christmas! There were articles about the song as well in the Telegraph Magazine (featuring the Bing picture disc) and also the Sunday Times of 19th December carried a feature by Michael Freedland on Irving Berlin which included a large reproduction of the cinema advert for the film of White Christmas and naturally Bing was prominent in this. The latter article was linked to the TV special shown on Christmas Day about Irving Berlin which Bert Bishop will review elsewhere in the magazine. Nice to see member Joe Baron in the Stars in Their Eyes New Year Special impersonating Bing too.

Thank you to the many members who sent us cards, many of which had a Bing flavour. It would be nice to reproduce many of these but shortage of space means that we can display only two. These are from Ragnar Uppman and from Gordon Wesley.





Incidentally, did you notice the special limited-edition boxed set of the video White Christmas (price £16.99) which was said to include a cassette of the soundtrack songs? Well, the cassette was really a re-issue of the original Brunswick LP LAT 8044 which was Decca's cover version of the songs with Peggy Lee deputising for Rosemary Clooney who was under contract to Columbia. The boxed set was a nice package though and I hope it sold well.

Great play has been made of the issue on CD for the first time of the 1942 version of White Christmas. Can you always tell the difference between that version and the more widely heard 1947 version? This is how John Bassett described the difference in BING 29:-

"Here we have two very similar recordings, but positive identification can be made by listening to the famous Crosby 'bubble' in the very first line of the song.

★ I'm dreaming of a White Christmas, just like the ones I used to know.

1942 version (DLA 3009-B):
The 'bubble' is heard on the words "dreaming" and "used"

1947 version (L4374-A):
The 'bubble' is heard only on the word "I".

Careful listening to the choir on both recordings can also prove helpful. In each version, they commence singing as Bing reaches the words 'just like the ones I used to know'. Their presence on the earlier version is barely audible at this precise point, but on the later version they tend to drown him. The balance between Bing and the choir is decidedly inferior on the remake, but nevertheless this is the version favoured by Decca and MCA for all microgroove re-issues of the world's biggest selling record."

Fred Reynolds in the latest volume of his epic work "The Crosby Collection" identifies the differences as follows:-

"On the 1942 recording he employs mordents to sing 'dreaming' on both occasions the word appears and on 'used'; when he sings 'I write' the first word is sung on one note; the voice fades on the word 'bright'. On the 1947 recording 'dreaming' and 'used' are sung straight but he uses a mordent on 'I' ('I used to know'); the first word of 'I write' is sung on three notes; the word 'bright' is sung forcefully."

You all know what a mordent is, don't you? It is 'a melodic ornament consisting of the rapid alternation of a note one degree lower than it'. (Collins English Dictionary). Personally I just think that Bing sounds younger on the 1942 version but how you put this into words more precisely I don't know.

Finally, several members (including John Benstead) sent me a cutting from the Evening Standard of 17th December and I have pleasure in reproducing this with grateful thanks to the Evening Standard.

Milton *Shulman*

FRIDAY, 17 DECEMBER, 1993 **43**

Bing's black Christmas

No man is more identified with the glow and innocence of Christmas than Bing Crosby, whose recording of White Christmas has sold millions. His shambling nonchalance and languid honeyed voice seemed immune to gloom.

Reviewing his film Mr Music, in 1950, I said that the picture was as restful as a sleeping pill and that Crosby's performance was as relaxed as a slumbering oyster.

These mild jibes provoked Bing into writing to me to reveal a surprising anxiety suffered by a man who was then one of the most popular stars in Hollywood.

"I hope the film has a good reception in England," he wrote. "My last three or four efforts haven't been too successful over there, or over here either, for that matter.

"I'm beginning to wonder if the public is getting wise to me, or weary of me, or if the stories had been susceptible to criticism or what. Possibly a combination of all these factors. After all, I've made 40-some pictures, I believe, and my talents are limited and it's pretty difficult to come up with anything original or new when faced with me as a leading man.

"But we keep trying, and maybe we'll be able to develop another story such as Going My Way, before they cast me aside entirely."

Those morose reflections about himself were written on 1 December 1950.

Bing Crosby: Christmases not always happy and bright

TOP OF THE POPS

Following the article under this heading in the last magazine, Barry Whittingham wrote to supply an extract from another of Joel Whitburn's books — **Top 1000 x 5** — which lists the top 50 artists in the period 1940 to 1993. Using a points system based on the number of hits across 5 charts (Hot, Country, Pop, Adult Contemporary and R & B) the results are:-

1.	Bing Crosby	34,517
2.	Elvis Presley	27,414
3.	Frank Sinatra	24,549
4.	Perry Como	23,545
5.	Eddy Arnold	23,191
6.	Glenn Miller	21,352
7.	Stevie Wonder	21,093
8.	Louis Jordan	17,290

Bing is on top again thanks to his incredible successes in the 1940s but how surprising to see the names of Eddy Arnold and Louis Jordan. For full details of the various books published by Joel Whitburn, write to Record Research Inc., P.O. Box 200, Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin 53051, USA.

ROSEMARY SALUTES BING AT CARNEGIE HALL

Wig Wiggins, our hard working representative in the USA, had the marvellous experience of seeing Rosemary Clooney's splendid tribute to Bing last November and here is his special report.

Rosemary Clooney paid a sincere and heartfelt tribute to her long-time friend and fellow performer, Bing Crosby, before a sold-out audience at Carnegie Hall in New York City on the evening of November 1, 1993. Appearing in concert at the historic, beautifully-restored, turn-of-the-century building in the heart of Manhattan with an 18-piece big band (5 reeds, 8 brass and 5 rhythm), jazz trumpeter Jack Sheldon, the "Wise Guys" vocal trio, and Bing's son, Harry, Rosemary devoted the entire evening to the music and memory of her warmly-remembered mentor, Bing.

The rear of the open stage was simply decorated with two large hanging photographs of Bing at the prime of his career, and a third one of Bing and Rosemary performing together during their radio days. As the members of the audience were taking their seats, and again during intermission, tapes of some of Bing and Rosemary's radio broadcasts from the 1950's were played over Carnegie Hall's excellent sound system — creating an appropriate atmosphere for the evening.

From the first bars from the orchestra, until a standing ovation two-and-a-half hours later, the 2,800 concert-goers who attended were treated to a memorable evening honoring Bing and his half-century in show business, in a manner which has not been done since his death some sixteen years ago. And without question, there is no one else active in the popular music profession today who could have better presented such a memorable tribute to the Old Groaner than his friend and "favourite singer", Rosemary Clooney. The depth of her affection and admiration for Bing was evident throughout the evening, a feeling which was shared and reciprocated by the happy and enthusiastic audience that was fortunate enough to be present on this unique occasion.

A "Sentimental Journey" to Richmond

After Rosemary Clooney graciously accepted an honorary membership in the ICC last year (as reported in BING No. 103), my wife, Laura, and I drove the 90 miles from our home near Washington D.C. down to Richmond, Virginia, in July 1993 to see her perform as the featured artist during one evening of a ten-day jazz festival. Accompanied only by a five-man jazz combo (trumpet, sax, piano, bass and drums) — as is the case with most of her solo long play albums issued over the past decade by the Concord Record label — Rosemary was in excellent voice that evening as she sang her way easily through a fine program of classic songs by the Gershwins, Irving Berlin, Cole Porter and Duke Ellington, on what the local Richmond newspaper characterized as a "sentimental journey back through the 1930's and 40's" — before finishing with "Come On 'A My House" (what else?). She made several warm comments about her long association with Bing during the performance and featured a few of "Bing's songs" as well. After the concert, Laura and I were pleased to meet backstage with Rosemary and her agent from California, Allen Sviridoff, and we found her to be absolutely charming and gracious in every way. Not only does Rosemary continue to be a highly-professional performer with an even-warmer singing voice than earlier in her career, but she is extremely pleasant to meet and talk with on a personal basis.

Plans for Carnegie Hall

During our conversation, Laura and I learned that Rosemary would be appearing at Carnegie Hall on November 1, 1993, and that she had decided to make

that evening a special tribute to Bing. At her request, and with the much-appreciated assistance of other ICC members, including Derek Parkes and Stan White, I was gratified to be able subsequently to assist her preparations for the Carnegie Hall concert by providing tapes of some of her radio broadcasts with Bing, and of the live recording of Bing's performance at the London Palladium in 1976. These tapes were used to help select the particular songs which she decided to feature in New York.

And finally, on November 1st, Laura and I took the three-hour Metroliner train from Washington, D.C. to New York to attend her tribute to Bing and to share in the special glow of that occasion. It was a marvellous, once-in-a-lifetime experience.

A Mellow Big-Band Vocalist

Rosemary and Bing at Carnegie Hall in 1993, the 90th year of his birth! A warm, happy, upbeat evening of music and memories from one of the few remaining singers from the great days of the big bands. At sixty-five, which she happily admitted to when she flubbed the introduction to one of Bing's up-tempo songs, Rosemary Clooney today sings most of her numbers straight "on-the-melody" (thank goodness), with a lightly-swinging beat and a clearly-defined reading of the lyrics (the way they were meant to be sung), just the way Bing used to do. This evening, it was many of Bing's familiar favorites that she turned to, and she did an excellent job with them in every way.

Happy, Not Sad

After just a few bars from the orchestra, Rosemary quietly walked to center stage, without fanfare or introduction (as Bing did during his final concert tours), to stand behind a single floor microphone near the piano and sing a quiet and moving version of "My Buddy". It would be difficult to imagine a more appropriate opening number for such a special tribute: "Nights are long since you went away . . . I miss your smile, the touch of your hand . . . my buddy . . . your buddy misses you."

However, when "My Buddy" ended, Rosemary said to the audience that this *was not* going to be a "sentimental evening, but a happy one", and that it was the good things about Bing and his music that she wanted to recall and to share with everyone.

Rosemary then followed with three of her own favourite "Bing songs": "But Beautiful", "Moonlight Becomes You", and "Like Someone In Love" — each sung quietly, but forcefully, with the orchestra playing relatively-muted background harmonies behind the featured piano accompaniment of Rosemary's musical director for the last decade, John Oddo. She later told the audience that John was so young that most of Bing's songs had been popular long before he had ever joined the music scene. Nevertheless, he did a great job in support of Rosemary throughout the evening.

Duets With Bing

Next Rosemary introduced Jack Sheldon, a jazz trumpeter and sometime vocalist, who performed a brassy, hard-driving version of "I Don't Stand A Ghost Of A Chance With You", in kind of a quasi-imitation of Louis Armstrong. Rosemary then joined him in three duets from Bing's repertoire: "On A Slow Boat To China", "Now You Has Jazz", and "Well, Did You Evah" — each faithfully recreated from the original arrangements. Interestingly, although Rosemary sang her own part in the first duet, while Sheldon played Bing; for the two "High Society" songs, she took Bing's parts, even including Bing's familiar musical ad-line and spoken asides. And she did a great job with both songs.

White Christmas

Speaking easily and pleasantly with the audience between numbers, Rosemary made frequent comments about her experiences with Bing on radio and television, in films and on the concert stage. After her duets with Jack Sheldon, Rosemary sang a "happy Bing song", "Aren't You Glad You're You", from the film "The Bells of St. Mary's". She then performed a trio of songs from the 1954 movie she made with Bing, "White Christmas", along with several backstage stories about the film. First "Mandy" (sung with Bing, Danny Kaye and Vera Ellen in the movie), followed by "Love, You Didn't Do Right By Me" (Rosemary's featured solo, after her "breakup" with Bing). Finally, Rosemary closed the first half of the concert with a beautiful rendition of "White Christmas", beginning with the rarely-heard (and, for me, most inappropriate) verse. Not surprisingly, most of the audience did not recognize Bing's yuletide classic until Rosemary began the chorus.

Blues and the Rhythm Boys

After intermission, Rosemary sang a medley of two of Bing's best-known "blue" songs: "Where The Blue Of The Night" and "Blue Skies"; followed by a lovely, extended version of "It's Easy To Remember" from the film "Mississippi".

Rosemary then introduced the three "Wise Guys", a popular cabaret singing group from the New York area, who performed a lively, outstanding re-creation of the Rhythm Boys style in three of their well-remembered numbers: "Side By Side", "What Price Lyrics", and "Ain't She Sweet". Rosemary announced that they had memorized the arrangements from the original recordings by Bing, Al Rinker and Harry Barris, and it was obvious that they had done a thorough and very admirable job. The results were marvellous, if not to say brilliant. Watching them perform, it was easy to appreciate the tremendous impact that Bing, Al and Harry must have had on other New York audiences some 65 years ago, when they first burst onto the scene out of the thickets of Paul Whiteman's concert orchestra! The "Wise Guys"

were the surprise hit of the evening, and they left the entire audience calling for more, even those who may have not been at all familiar with the style or songs of the original Rhythm Boys.

Harry Crosby and Dublin

Next, Rosemary brought out Harry Crosby (whom she said is now a successful stockbroker, but still like a "fourth son" to her). He played a creditable electric guitar and sang "You've Got A Friend" with Rosemary, which Harry and Bing had performed together at the London Palladium in 1976. They also shared reminiscences with the Carnegie Hall audience of Bing's last concert in London.

Rosemary then closed that part of the evening with a special "thanks" to Bing for also having taken her with him to Dublin during his final tour, in memory of which she sang a beautifully-phrased "How Are Things In Glocca Morra".

The Crosby Medley

And then, to the capstone and highlight of the concert, at least for me, and I expect for quite a few others of the audience. Rosemary first described Bing's practice of closing his concerts with what she said he called "the act", which ICC members will know better as "the Crosby medley". Warning that it had been quite a lot of work "for someone her age" to learn all of the songs Bing had always included in his version of the medley, Rosemary said she was going to do her best, regardless, to sing them herself.

So with the reeds and brass sitting silently and, in effect, joining the audience, Rosemary turned towards her musical director at the piano, along with only guitar, bass and drums, and launched into her own re-creation of Bing's famous performance. Using Bing's original arrangements for each of the songs, she even tossed in Bing's familiar vocal tricks and asides as she moved from number to number. A couple of false starts only added to the charm of Rosemary's happy, rhythmic tour through Bing's medley, and I think it is only fair to say that Bing would have been pleased, if not a little surprised, to have heard Rosemary's tour de force through his lifetime of hits.

And the songs? It was exactly like the Palladium, in the summer of 1976, all over again! The same selections, in the same order, and with the same arrangements, all sung with the greatest verve and affection. If you can't remember all of the songs, and can't find your copy of K-Tel NE-951 or NE-1016, here is the full list:

1 I Surrender Dear
2 Swinging On A Star
3 Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams
4 True Love (with Harry Crosby)
5 Don't Fence Me In
6 Pennies From Heaven
7 Blue Hawaii
8 Sweet Leilani
9 Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral
10 Just One More Chance
11 Them There Eyes
12 Moonlight Becomes You
13 You Are My Sunshine
14 I'll Be Seeing You
15 White Cliffs of Dover
16 When The Lights Go On Again
17 Accentuate the Positive
18 Please
19 Baby Face
20 South of the Border
21 Galway Bay
22 Dinah
23 San Fernando Valley
24 I Found A Million Dollar Baby
25 San Antonio Rose
26 I'm An Old Cowhand
27 In A Little Spanish Town
28 Wait Till The Sun Shines Nellie
29 It's Easy To Remember
30 Blue Skies
31 It's Been A Long, Long, Time
32 Mississippi Mud
33 Ol' Man River

And yes, when it was all over, Rosemary and her pianist unfurled and tossed his copy of the almost endless sheet music across the stage — just like Bing and Joe Bushkin used to do. It certainly was the best imitation of Bing's incomparable "act" that I ever expect to see or hear, and it brought down the house!

Old Blue, With A Beat

After the applause receded, the entire band rejoined Rosemary for a driving, jazzy, all-out rendition of "Where The Blue Of The Night (Meets The Gold Of The Day)" — unlike any of Bing's many versions of his theme, but one which I know he would have thoroughly enjoyed. And as the final, over-the top notes were played by the orchestra, Rosemary raised her arms to the audience and called out, "Mr. Bing Crosby!" as she left the stage.

And it was all over. A splendid evening, and a wonderful tribute to Bing from one of his true friends and admirers, Rosemary Clooney, honorary member of the International Crosby Circle. Thanks, Rosemary, from all of us, for helping in such a marvellous way to keep Bing's incomparable musical legacy alive in 1993!

If Concord Records does not decide to convert its 1978 album "Rosie Sings Blues" to compact disc, I hope that Rosemary might decide to re-record it as a new album, adding her splendid version of the Crosby medley as well to provide all Bing collectors, as well as her own fans, with a memorable souvenir of her wonderful tribute to Bing at Carnegie Hall. Certainly the Old Groaner would be proud to be remembered in such a manner!

F.B. Wiggins

(Editor: Thanks Wig for a splendid article. Apart from Rosie, there is news of another significant concert in the USA. We continue with . . .)

The Return of The Prodigal Son

Yes, Gary Crosby was back on stage on January 11 and 12 at the Ambassador Auditorium in Pasadena. The same stage where Bing fell into the Orchestra pit in 1977. The show was called **Big Band '94** and featured Guy Lombardo's Royal Canadians with The Pied Pipers and Gary. Gary began his act with 'Sam's Song' and 'Play a Simple Melody' with Dick Castle of the Pied Pipers taking Bing's part. There were only a few neutral comments about Bing and the act had as its theme the great songwriters who had visited his parents' home. The songs performed were Jamboree Jones, One For My Baby, Accentuate The Positive and Dream (all Mercer), Georgia On My Mind (Hoagy) and Downtown Poker Club (Phil Harris).

Charles Baillie reviewing the show in BING TALKS magazine commented:

"With a slimmed-down figure, standard haircut, tuxedo and black tie, Gary could have posed for a 'Brooks Brothers' advertisement. While his voice is a bit raspy, his over-all stage presence was fine; and he was well received by the audience of mostly senior citizens who attend 'Big Band Concerts'. However, I'm sure a substantial portion of the applause was nostalgia for Bing!"

Letter from Leslie

The indefatigable Leslie Gaylor gives his news and views

Last December 21st was a happy day for me as a knock on the door from the postman had him handing me a selection of Christmas cards plus one large envelope which I instinctively knew contained my Christmas issue of BING. How right I was and, as I guess is the same as all other members. I had to delve into its contents and digest what was written straight away. Once again I would like to thank all contributors for their interesting write-ups and due thanks to those involved in the production and distribution of the magazine.

Judging by the mail that comes here, many members have been very pleased with the Jasmine CD **Hey — Look Us Over!** and all of them want more of the Bing and Buddy Cole tracks issued. There were over 250 tracks recorded by Bing and Buddy between 1954 and 1960 and I understand that BING magazine hopes to run a feature on these later in the year in which a full list will be printed. I have mentioned on many occasions in the past about these being stored in Bekins Warehouse in Los Angeles and you all know the story of how Ken Barnes used 73 of these tracks on the various albums he put out with enhanced accompaniment. Over the years, I have nagged all concerned about further issues from this treasure trove and in correspondence with Kathryn Crosby in 1987 she told me that she was hoping to have the material sent to her. In my Christmas card to Kathryn last Christmas, I included a note asking her to let us enjoy more of the Bing and Buddy material. Kathryn does not often reply to letters nowadays but she kindly sent me a short note which appears to indicate that Basil Grillo (former Director and Manager of Bing Crosby Enterprises) may still have control of the tapes. I don't have Basil's address but if I can obtain it, I might write to him to see if he can get more of the tracks issued.

Another CD which has been issued recently is the marvellous "A Little Bit Of Irish" and my thanks to George O'Reilly and his associates for their fine enterprise in releasing the CD and therefore letting us enjoy some wonderful material. I do hope that all members will support the issue by purchasing a copy. It is worth mentioning that the album is on cassette as well because I know that many members don't have CD players.

I must pass comment on the 4 CD boxed set "Bing Crosby — His Legendary Years". I am very pleased indeed to have this set and both Stan White and I have distributed sets to several radio stations on behalf of Ernest Sutkowski. My own thoughts on the set seem to coincide with the opinion of numerous others who, talking from a collector's point of view, regret that many of the old familiar 'war-horses' have been trotted out once again when so many other gems have been passed by. Just imagine if they had included songs such as "Sentimental Music', 'Moonlight On a White Picket Fence', 'Do You Care', 'Shepherd Serenade' and 'The Magic Window' in the set. But we must remember that sets such as this would not make money if only collectors bought them so some more familiar tracks have to be included to give the issue a wider appeal and other opinions expressed in my mail are that the set is a marketable project.

The Editor has been asking me to provide

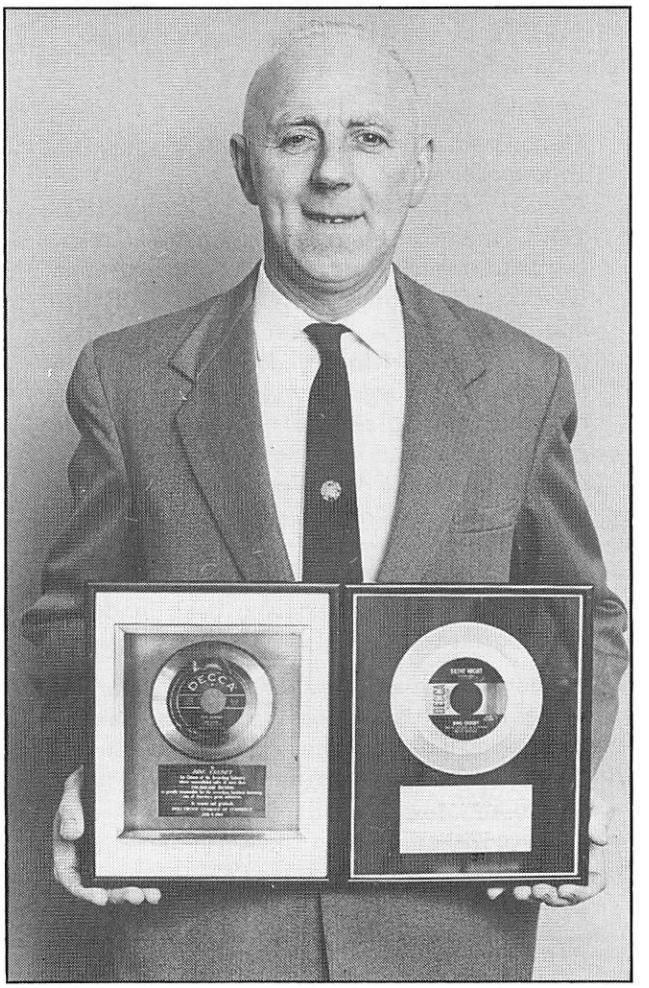
photographs to accompany my article and members might like to see the accompanying picture of me (when I was a bit younger) holding framed photographs of Bing's two platinum discs. The one in my right hand was presented to Bing on June 9th 1960 by the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce to commemorate a sale of 200 million records. It honours Bing as 'the first citizen of the recording industry.' The photo in my left hand is of the disc awarded to Bing on September 15th 1970 for sales of 300,650,000 records with Decca alone. At the time of the presentation of the second disc, it was estimated that Bing's global life-time sales on 88 labels in 28 countries totalled, according to his royalty reports, an amazing 362 million. The gift of these two photos from Bing enabled me to have them reproduced in the famed 'Guinness Book of Records' some years later which Bing got to see and he sent me his thanks for doing so.

A fortnight before last Christmas, I happened to be walking past a men's outfitters shop in the middle of town when the Manager called my attention and asked me if I could provide him with a song sheet or the words to 'White Christmas'. He went on to say that he had a son who was a Down's Syndrome sufferer and he was teaching his lad the 'White Christmas' song and was having some success. I was glad to be able to help out a little by providing the words.

I am often asked to pass on amusing anecdotes of Bing and my friend Irene Orr reminded me of one you might like to read. We were at Sunningdale Golf Course one day when Bing was surrounded by many people and a lady got to speak to him. She told him that she had attended all of his London Palladium concerts and this brought forth a typical Bing comment when he said "What, have you come to get your money back?"

Finally a word of praise to all those broadcasters who so regularly feature Bing on their programmes. Thanks fellas and keep up the good work.

Leslie Gaylor



BING SWINGS ON AN ASTEROID

The Central Bureau for Astronomical Telegrams (CBAT) and the Minor Planet Center, both located at the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory (SAO) in Cambridge, Massachusetts, are responsible for disseminating information on new discoveries to the astronomical community and for keeping track of comets and minor planets (asteroids) that populate the solar system.

Minor planets are small, rocky bodies that travel through space. Most orbit the Sun between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter in the region known as the asteroid belt, although many stray outside this region. The first, Ceres, was discovered in 1801. Only one minor planet, Vesta, is ever visible to the unaided eye.

As of 1st September 1993, there were 5,655 numbered asteroids of which 4,512 had received names. In the nineteenth century, minor planets received feminine classical names such as Ceres, Roman goddess of harvests; in more recent times minor planets have received names such as (2602) Moore, named for the well-known populariser of astronomy, Patrick Moore.

Proposed names are judged by a seven-person committee which tries to ensure that certain guide-lines are followed: names must not be in bad taste; names glorifying political/military individuals/events are not permitted unless the event occurred, or the individual died, more than one hundred years ago; and names must not be too similar to existing minor-planet

names. Also, minor planets are the only celestial objects which may routinely receive the names of living persons.

The Minor Planet Circular published on 1st September 1993 includes a new entry of great interest and delight to all Bing Crosby fans worldwide. The citation in full reads as follows:

(2825) Crosby = 1938 SD
Discovered 1938 Sept. 19 by C. Jackson at Johannesburg.
Named for Harry Lillis ('Bing') Crosby (1903-1977), American singer and film actor. Crosby began to sing while studying law at college and, after a spell with the Paul Whiteman Orchestra in a trio called The Rhythm Boys, appeared in the early talkie ***King of Jazz*** *(1930). Later, turning solo, he began to make films in earnest, notably the 'Road' series of films with Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour, and won an Academy Award for* ***Going My Way*** *(1944). Crosby's 'White Christmas' and 'Silent Night' are two of the biggest-selling recordings of all time. Name proposed by G.V. and R. Williams, the identifications for this object having been made by C.M. Bardwell.*

So although Bing may not be 'swinging on a star' in this particular case, he is certainly swinging on an asteroid! Next time you look up at the night sky you can reflect that, although you can't see the asteroid, Bing now has a place in the heavens. And to complete things as he would have wished, another citation in the same issue reads:

(2829) Bobhope = 1948 PK
Discovered 1948 Aug. 9 by E.L. Johnson of Johannesburg.
Named in honour of Bob Hope (real name Leslie Townes Hope), American comedian, born Eltham, England in 1903. Star of numerous radio and television productions, Hope made his mark playing bumbling fools and cowards in such films as ***Cat and the Canary*** *(1939),* ***Caught in the Draft*** *(1941) and* ***Princess and the Pirate*** *(1944). Hope has been the recipient of four special Academy Awards and more than forty honorary doctorates. Name proposed by G.V. and R. Williams, the identifications for this object having been made by C.M. Bardwell.*

It is interesting to note that to avoid confusion with other asteroids, Bob's official minor-planet name is Bobhope, one word.

The C.M. Bardwell mentioned in both citations is the retired former Associate Director of the Minor Planet Center. G.V. Williams, the current Associate Director, is the British scientist who in 1991 re-discovered the minor planet 'Mildred', which has been 'lost' for 75 years. R. Williams is his father, and the graphic designer who worked on **The Bing Crosby Years** LPs, CDs and cassettes published in The Reader's Digest.

(Editor: I never cease to be amazed at Bing's impact in so many circles. He always was a star and now he is a minor planet as well!).

RHYTHM ON RECORD

The letter from Geoff Block of Southend-on-Sea in BING 105 caught my eye, because he talks about borrowing a book from a neighbour called, "Rhythm On Record", and he wondered if it contained the first Bing discography. I have the book, it was written by Hilton R. Schleman, with a bit of help from, John Hammond, and published by Melody Maker Ltd., of 93 Long Acre, London WC2, in hardback at 7/6d. (The book is now out of copy-right and has been re-published at £51.95 by the Greenwood Publishing Group of 3 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London WC2E 8LU. They have simply copied the original pages).

It is a book which becomes more interesting with the passage of time, because it lists all of the jazz and dance band leaders for which the author could find information, from 1906 to 1936. British, American and others. It tries to give a short biography of each band-leader, the personnel of the band at a given point in time, or a collective one if the former is not possible, plus a list of records made, that is, label, song title and the record number. No specific recording or release dates are listed, although the period of time covering the release is often given.

"Rhythm On Record" does not confine itself to the bands, so that solo vocalists, and singing groups are also listed, along with some of the records made up to 1936. Even Sidney Torch, then the organist at the Regal Cinema, Marble Arch, London, is listed, because of some of the rhythm numbers he recorded on the giant Christie Organ in that Cinema.

The entry for "The Boss" is very good, there are a few errors in the write up about Bing, but I have read much worse in the notes for various albums over the past 3 decades, and Mr. Schleman could not have known then, the correct date of Bing's birth. The list of Bing's solo records makes interesting copy for a 1936 publication, and by turning to the pages devoted to Paul Whiteman, details about, The Rhythm Boys, and some of their recordings are given.

Anyone who listens to Paul Barnes broadcasting from

Runnin' Wild. 2387.
St. Louis Gal. 4440.
Shoo Shoo Boogey Boo. 4447.
Shufflin' Mouse. 2507.
Snakes Hips. 2418.
State Street Blues. 2292.
Sugar is Back in Town. 4404.
Suite 16.
Sweet Ida Joy. 4404.
Those Panama Mamas. 2879.
Tiger Rag.
Walk Jenny Walk. 2490.
Where Will the Sun Shine. 2461.
You Tell Her I Stutter. 2404.

AMERICAN VOCALION. Under the title of the Tennessee Tooters.
Everybody Loves My Baby. 14985.
Hot Hot Hottentot. 14967.
How Come You Do Me? 14967.
I Ain't Got Nobody. 14952.
Jacksonville Gal. 14985.
Red-hot Henry Brown. 15004.
Those Panama Mamas. 15004.

Rosetta Crawford.—Here is some obscure American vocalist concerning whom various inquiries have resulted in a complete blank.

PARLOPHONE. Vocals.
Down on the Levee Blues. E5234.
Lonesome Woman Blues. E5234.

Wilton Crawley.—Wilton Crawley, coloured American clarinet player and vocalist, is said to have invented his own language and to play best when standing on his head.

He has made numerous recordings in America, and is usually accompanied by Lonnie Johnson, on guitar. More recently he recorded two titles with the Washboard Rhythm Kings.

OKEH. Clarinet solos, some with vocals also by Wilton Crawley.
Ceechie River Blues. 8492.
Crawley Blues. 8479.
Crawley Clarinet Moan. 8539.
I'm Forever Changing Sweethearts. 8589.
Irony Daddy Blues. 8479.
Love Will Drive Me Crazy. 8539.
My Perfect Thrill. 8718.
Shadow of the Blues. 8619.
She's Forty With Me. 8492.
Tal Tillie's Too Tight. 8619.
Wishing. 8718.

VICTOR. Wilton Crawley's Orchestra.
Keep Your Business to Yourself. V-38116.
She's Driving Me Wild. V-38094.
She's Got What I Need. V-38116.
Snake Hip Dance. V-38094.

VICTOR. With the Washboard Rhythm Kings.
I'm Her Papa. 23344.
New Crawley Blues. 23344.

PARLOPHONE.
Old Broke Up Shoes. R2163.

Charles Creath's Jazz-o-Maniacs.—Little is known of this coloured American combination except for the fact that the unit dates back to the early 'twenties, and at that time Eugene P. Sedric, tenor saxophone player, was a member of the group.

OKEH.
Butter-finger Blues. 8477.
Crazy Quilt. 8477.

Bing Crosby.—Harry Lillis Crosby was born in Tacoma, Washington, U.S.A., on May 2nd, 1904. He received his nickname "Bing" while at school in Spokane.

His father's idea was that he should become a lawyer, so he was sent to Gonzaga College to begin his studies. Bing sang with the college glee club, the members of which also included one Al Rinker. The two put their heads together and organised a seven-piece dance orchestra, The Musicaladers. Bing played the drums and sang duets with Rinker. They became a great success at college dances.

A local theatre manager heard the band, liked it and booked the combination for his vaudeville house. After that they toured the Pacific coast in vaudeville and wound up in Los Angeles in 1927. While Bing and Al were playing there at the Metropolitan Theatre, Paul Whiteman and his Orchestra were filling an engagement at the Million Dollar Theatre. "The King of Jazz" dropped in to watch a matinee at the Metropolitan and liked the work of the two young vocalists. He signed them to a contract.

Crosby and Rinker went East with Whiteman. Shortly after a third member, Harry Barris, was added to make a trio, and this was the beginning of Paul Whiteman's Rhythm Boys, who became a world-famous vocal trio.

Bing remained with the band for three years, until 1930, when after appearing in the film, "The King of Jazz," he left Whiteman and started to make a name for himself as a soloist at the Cocoanut Grove in Los Angeles.

Appearances in films and recording activities followed. He divided his time between broadcasting twice nightly, appearing five times daily on the stage of the Paramount Theatre, New York, making records and making pictures. During 1930 and 1931 he was accompanied by the late Eddie Lang, the guitarist. They appeared together in the film "The Big Broadcast."

Crosby is part composer of "From Monday On," "Blue of the Night" and "I Would If I Could, But I Can't." In addition to his solo records he has recorded with the Mills Brothers, and with the orchestras of Duke Ellington, Don Redman, Isham Jones, Guy Lombardo, Jimmie Grier, Lennie Hayton and Gus Arnheim. His films include "The Big Broadcast," "College Humor," "Too Much Harmony," "We're Not Dressing," "She Loves Me Not" and "Mississippi." He has also appeared in numerous short films, one credited and devoted to his signature tune, "Where the Blue of the Night."

His wife is Dixie Lee, the screen actress. They have three children. Bing has numerous brothers, Everett Crosby, who manages the Select Music Company, Harry Crosby, who recently turned composer and wrote "Plain Old Me," and Bob Crosby, vocalist, and orchestra leader.

H.M.V.
Wrap Your Troubles in Dreams. B3936.

VICTOR.
Just a Gigolo. 22701.

AMERICAN COLUMBIA.
Baby, Oh Where Can You Be? 1851-D.
Can't We Be Friends? 2001-D.
Gay Love. 2001-D.
I Kiss Your Hand, Madame. 1851-D.
My Kinda Love. 1773-D.
Till We Meet. 1773-D.

BRUNSWICK.
Adeste Fidelis. 02054.
After Sundown. 01667.
At Your Command. 1182.
Beautiful Girl. 01667.
Black Moonlight. 01596.
Blue Prelude. 01577.
Boots and Saddle. 02100.
Brother, Can You Spare a Dime? 1434.
Cabin in the Cotton. 1326.
Can't We Talk It Over. 1271.
Dancing in the Dark. 1256.
Day You Came Along. 01597.
Did You Ever See a Dream Walking? 01700.
*Dinah. 1271 and 1424.
Down by the River. 01994.
Down the Old Ox Road. 01563.
Faded Summer Love. 1240.
From the Top of Your Head. 02082.
Gems from George White's Scandals. 105.
Ghost of a Chance With You. 1423.
Give Me a Heart to Sing To. 01879.
Goodnight, Lovely Little Lady. 01768.
Goodnight, Sweetheart. 1240.
Happy-Go-Lucky You. 1326.
Here Lies Love. 1380.
Home on the Range. 01608.
How Deep is the Ocean? 1421.
How Long Will It Last? 1297.
I Apologise. 1219.
I Found a Million-dollar Baby. 1197.
I Guess It Had To Be That Way. 01597.
I Love You Truly. 01885.
I Wish I Were Aladdin. 02082.
I Wished on the Moon. 02070.
I Would If I Could, But I Can't. 01649.
If You Should Ever Need Me. 1166.
I'll Follow You. 1421.
I'm Hummin', I'm Whistlin', I'm Singin'. 01849.
I'm Playing With Fire. 1444.
I'm Sorry, Dear. 1270.
I'm Thru With Love. 1197.
It's Easy to Remember. 01993.
It's Within Your Power. 1466.
I've Got the World on a String. 01531.
I've Got to Pass Your House. 01577.
I've Got to Sing a Torch Song. 01563.
June in January. 01951.
Just an Echo in the Valley. 1423.
Just Awearying For You. 01885.
Just One More Chance. 1155.
Last Round-Up. 01608.
†Lawd, You Made the Night Too Long. 107.
Lazy Day. 01669.
Learn to Croon. 01562.
Let Me Call You Sweetheart. 01925 and 01992.
Let's Put Out the Lights. 1404.
Let's Spend an Evening at Home. 01700.
Let's Try Again. 1374.
Linger a Little Longer in the Twilight. 1397.
Little Dutch Mill. 01735.
Love in Bloom. 01850.
Love is Just Around the Corner. 01952.

* With the Mills Brothers.
† With the Boswell Sisters and Don Redman's Orchestra.

10 pm until Midnight each weekday on BBC Network East, which links up all of the BBC local radio stations from the East Midlands to the East Coast, will know that Paul calls Bing "The Boss", when playing his songs, (and Paul has plenty to play, through the kindness of Ernest Sutkowski, Leslie Gaylor, with a little help from me).

Stan White

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from transactions undertaken as a result of these entries.

Please send all advertisements to the Editor.

Greg Van Beek, 929 Hillcrest St., West Bend, W1 53095, USA.

More Bing TV shows wanted, video (NTSC) or audio tapes.

- The Pearl Bailey Show 23/1/71
- Bing Crosby & Friends 27/2/72
- The Mike Douglas Show 28/11/75
- The Bob Hope Special 21/4/76
- Chrysler Presents The Bob Hope Special 16/2/71

I have audio cassettes of Bing's Christmas TV Shows 1966-77 to trade plus other TV appearances.

Movies Unlimited, 6736 Castor Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19149, USA

Ernest Sutkowski has drawn our attention to the latest catalogue issued by this company and they have twenty films starring Bing available on video (NTSC only) plus many films in which Bing made cameo appearances. There are also a limited number of Bing's TV shows in the catalogue as well. Call 1-215-722-8398 in the USA for video catalogue. The company has a separate catalogue for LaserDiscs.

Barry Sandercock, 10 Captain Cook Close, Chalfont St. Giles, Bucks HP8 4DS. (Tel. 0494 87 2976)

FOR SALE
Magazines with Bing on the covers. All excellent condition.

LIFE	28/10/46 (Bing and Joan Caulfield)
LOOK	17/1/50 (Bing)
LOOK	13/3/58 (Bing and Kathryn)
LOOK	22/7/58 (Bing and Bob Crosby)

Offers invited for all four. (Closes end of May)

Roger Addey, 17 Tehidy Gardens, Camborne, Cornwall TR14 0ET.

"I would like to dispose of my record player which has the facility for playing the old 78 records. The model I have is a Garrad Mk IV with the original instruction manual, which shows the size as 16.5 x 14 x 6.5" deep, including the plastic top.

As it is in very good condition, I feel that £35, plus carriage would be a fair price, although I am open to any reasonable offers."

Redmond Curtis, 263 Lisgard St., Sydney, Nova Scotia, Canada B1P 2ZI.

Redmond is a singer and he is looking to acquire clear photocopies of sheet music which he can use to learn various Bing songs. His main interest is Bing's Irish music and he would particularly like to obtain Bing's Irish Songs Songbook(s) plus copies of the sheet music for:

My Girl's An Irish Girl
Top O' The Morning
Let's Harmonize

He is also seeking one or two coloured photos of Bing in his 1950-60 years. Contact Redmond direct if you can help.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Crosby Clubs Around the World

The ICC is pleased to be associated with the following Crosby Clubs. Please write to the addresses shown for further details.

Club Crosby, BINGANG
Mark Scrimger, President,
Wayne L. Martin, Editor
PO Box 3849 Kirkwood, Missouri 63122,
USA
(Members in Europe should enrol via Ken Crossland, 9 Arden Drive, Dorridge, Solihull B93 8LP)

BINGthings Society
Bob Lundberg, President
5021 57th Avenue Court West, Tacoma,
Washington 98467-4802, USA

Bing's Friends And Collectors Society,
Hobie and Cathie Wilson, 236 Andrieux St.,
Sonoma, California 95476-6909, USA

The Queensland Bing Crosby Society,
117 Thurecht Parade, Scarborough,
Queensland, Australia.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THE CROSBY COLLECTION
Part Three: 1942 - 1950

★ ★ ★

Who else could review the latest volume from Fred Reynolds but Colin Pugh?

★ ★ ★

Fred Reynolds, with his mammoth and definitive Bing Crosby Commercial Recordings Review, Part Three of which was recently published, has now turned the final corner and is heading up the home stretch; year-wise, he is exactly two thirds through with one third to go. It will certainly not seem like this to the author who glances forward at the many hundreds of titles yet to be given the special 'Reynolds' treatment, for song-wise, counting each Take as a separate recording, which of course it is, he is little over half-way, due mainly to multitrack issues like the Musical Auto-biography of the mid-fifties and the Singalongs of the late fifties and early sixties, the latter being most prolific.

So much for statistics which are only incidental. With a serialized work such as this, retaining the identical formats of the previous volumes without any lowering of the very high standards they established, it is almost impossible to review without boring repetition and ad nauseam use of superlatives. Picking up the subtitle of 'The Crosby Collection' where we have "A Review Of The Commercial Recordings Made By Bing Crosby", the question arises of 'how do you review a review'? Everybody's opinion is valid. Each entry abounds with factual information coupled, in most cases with the author's own opinion of the performance. This unique blending of 'fact' with 'opinion' makes for fascinating reading. It must be said that the unsuppressed and unbiased levelling of criticism as opposed to the aesthetic appreciation given to the performances is very honest and well balanced. In this respect, in fairness to Bing it should be remembered that during his lifetime he learned and performed approximately 4,000 different songs with more than 11,500 performances in all mediums. Now we are not talking about **a computer** here, but a human being. In his 51 years of public performances he must have had his share of common colds and it is a matter of general knowledge that he had his full share of illnesses, accidents and operations. To this you can add the most common complaint of all — fatigue. Ergo, there must have been hundreds of times he presented himself before a microphone in less than the pink condition required for a first class performance. We know a critic has to ignore these factors and can only appraise the performance as delivered which is fine just as long as with the criticism we keep in mind the reasons for, shall we say, less than 100% performances, as long as 'talent' is not confused with 'output'. We must not expect every painting from an artist to be a masterpiece. Even Crosby, a master of self-effacement admitted to his ability to 'carry a toon' but was nevertheless acutely aware of his own human fallibilities when, after attempting a song several times and still hitting a wrong note, said to his audience — "I'll just have to sing easy songs; you folks will be wanting to get along home'.

If you acquired and enjoyed Fred's first two volumes then you are not going to be disappointed with Part 3. If anything, he has excelled himself and what a wonderful collection this library will be when completed. Don't miss out!

Colin Pugh

(Editor: I can only echo everything Colin has said. Contact John Joyce — address on inside front cover — if you want to acquire this marvellous book. Hard cover, 317 pages, price £15.)

The Most Famous Man In The World

As we went to print, BBC Radio 2 put out a 2 hour tribute to Bing in their Sunday night Arts programme on March 20th. George Penny did a very competent job in presenting this, making the comment that at one time 'Bing was the most famous man in the world.' A full review will appear in the next edition of BING.

Keith Parkinson's
CELLULOID CROSBY
THE GREAT JOHN L.

Or should it be "The so-so John L.", because as a film it disappointed and probably prevented Bing from developing a film production company on a larger scale during the 1940s. For Bing, film production was an investment opportunity and a method of diversifying his involvement in show business. He set up the company Bing Crosby Productions Incorporated jointly with Harry Lowe Crosby, and then father and son had equal billing in institutional terms. In the eyes of Bing's financial advisors it was also a device which would provide financial concessions. Father took a back seat thereafter and son used his name to generate publicity for the finished product.

United Artists undertook to release "The Great John L." U-A was a releasing studio far more than it was a production company. In the immediate post war years it was hungry for product to feed the enormous appetite of moviegoers in the second half of the 1940s.

Bing hired two professional friends for key roles in the film's making. Victor Young composed the music and Frank Tuttle directed. Tuttle was trusted by Bing to come up with a watchable picture. He had satisfied Bing with his skills by directing half a dozen Crosby pictures in the 1930s 'The Big Broadcast' (1932), 'Here Is My Heart' (1934), 'Two For Tonight' (1935), 'Waikiki Wedding' (1937), 'Doctor Rhythm' (1938) and 'Paris Honeymoon' (1939). Tuttle's non-Crosby track record was also strong. He began acting and directing whilst at college and entered movies in the 'twenties as a writer for Paramount.

Bing's judgement for leading man wasn't quite as sound. He chose an unknown, Greg McClure, for the title part. McClure was born Dale Easton in 1918 and made his movie debut in 'The Great John L." To counteract this casting risk, negotiations with 20th Century Fox resulted in Linda Darnell being loaned out by that studio for the part of John L's leading lady. In 1945 she was a valuable studio property. Immediately before and after her 'Great John L.' assignment she was in two other well respected 1945 films for Fox: 'Hangover Square' and 'Fallen Angel." Her own career got underway in 1937 when, as a sixteen year old, she won a 'Gateway to Hollywood' contest which resulted in a screen test for RKO. Her seven year contract with 20th Century-Fox was signed two years later and she had definite box-office pull by the time Bing approved her casting.

The second female lead in the film was Barbara Britton. She entered films at the age of 22 in 1941 and was better known for her looks than her acting prowess.

The film itself was set in London, Paris and New York. It purports to be the biography of Heavyweight Boxer John L. Sullivan, known as the Boston Strong Boy. He marries a musical comedy star (Darnell) when he is at the peak of his career. He loses his title to Gentlemen Jim Corbett, (the subject of a previous Hollywood Bio-Pic which was far more popular than this film). When the going gets tough Sullivan resorts to the bottle and his wife deserts him. He never returns to his previous glories but sees the error of his ways and joins the Temperance Movement. The closing scenes show him walking off the platform at a Temperance meeting into the arms of his first love (Britton). All this was written by James Edward Grant, who also acted as producer on the picture. Grant was a popular pulp novelist until he settled in Hollywood in the 'thirties to contribute stories and screenplays for action movies.

A scintillating story of the Gay Nineties... amazingly recreated to thrill you with the adventures of its fabulous John L. Sullivan... his time, his life... his Loves!
BING CROSBY PRODUCTIONS presents
"THE GREAT JOHN L."
starring
LINDA DARNELL
BARBARA BRITTON
and introducing
GREG McCLURE as John L.
OTTO KRUGER • WALLACE FORD
GEORGE MATHEWS • ROBERT BARRAT
LEE SULLIVAN as "Mickey"
Original Screen Play by James Edward Grant
Produced by Frank R. MASTROLY and
James Edward GRANT
Directed by
Frank TUTTLE

When the film was released in this country the distributors felt that the British cinemagoing public would not know what to make of its original title. As a result it was given a title change to 'A Man Called Sullivan'!

Critically it received 'Take it or leave it' write-ups. In the States it was regarded as "not a bad little biog" (Leonard Maltin) and it was said to be "nicely done with exciting, often hilarious, ring sequences" (Steven H. Scheuer). In Britain Leslie Halliwell called it a "very mild biopic" and Ronald Bergan wrote, "Good on period atmosphere but Frank Tuttle's direction is strictly in the flyweight division."

But critical opinion isn't what counts. Ticket sales are all that matter. 'The Great John L.' was not popular and failed to register significantly at the box-office. In the U.S.A. Bing did his best to make it a success by contributing his talents to a series of radio advertisements. He also recorded the song "A Friend Of Yours". It was a ballad written by Johnny Burke and James Van Heusen and was featured in the film. Bing sang it on radio as often as was decent, always refering to it as from the film 'The Great John L.' In the U.K. none of the major circuits accepted the film and it was left to fend for itself with sporadic bookings.

With the benefit of foresight Bing should have recognised its lack of potential because:

a) Boxing pictures don't make money. Women can't relate to them, so half the potential audience is lost right away.
b) Viewers don't like downbeat endings. No word of mouth recommendation follows unhappy endings.
c) An unknown in a starring role is a major risk unless he has the magnetism of a Brando.

For the "Where are they now" records it is possible to trace the post-John L. Careers of the films main perpetrators. Greg McClure ended up playing comic strip boxer Joe Palooka in a programmer. He disappeared entirely from the entertainment scene after making 'Stop That Cab' in 1951.

Linda Darnell made some quality movies in the late 'forties. 'My Darling Clementine' was a hit in 1946 and 'Forever Amber' was a much talked about disappointment the following year. Her main asset was her feminine charm. Her looks and her career began to fade at the same time. In the 1950s she sought work appearing in cheapies in Italy. In 1965 she was watching a television showing of her 1940 film "Stardust" when the house caught fire and she was burned to death.

One of the reviews for 'The Great John L.' called Barbara Britton's acting 'wooden'. She recognised this and retired from the screen in 1956. She became better known as spokeswoman for Revlon Cosmetics.

Director Frank Tuttle was a star witness during the McCarthy era. He admitted membership of the Communist Party to the House of Unamerican Activities Committee. He also shopped his fellow workers and although he was not blacklisted by the Hollywood Studios his career fell into sharp decline after his testimony. He made only eight films between 'The Great John L.' and his death in 1963.

As for the man behind the Production Company — he carried on singing and acting for the next thirty-odd years. Bing was also directly involved in one more film project under the aegis of Bing Crosby Productions Inc. this was 'Abie's Irish Rose', released in 1946. Once again, the punters stayed away in droves. B.C.P.I. then lay dormant until the 1960's when it was revived for three popular American television series: 'Ben Casey', 'Slattery's People' and inevitably 'The Bing Crosby Show'. In 1970 the company resumed financing cinema films. Ten movies followed. Bing had artistic input into just one 'The New York Experience' (1973). For the record, the others are 'Willard', 'Ben', 'You'll Like My Mother', 'Walking Tall', 'Terror In the Wax Museum', 'Arnold', 'W', 'The Reincarnation of Peter Proud' and 'Part 2 Walking Tall'.

Keith Parkinson

A △ THE A-Z OF BING'S MOVIES Z

We continue through the alphabet with Keith's marathon series

DISSERTATION ON THE STATE OF BLISS. Song. If there had been an Academy award for the most unwieldy song title, this would have won in 1955. It was written by Harold Arlen (music) and Ira Gershwin (words) for the 1954 Paramount Picture 'The Country Girl'. It is being sung by Jacqueline Fontaine in a cabaret sequence towards the end of the film when a drunken Crosby appears on the scene and helps out. Not a memorable ditty and don't hold your breath waiting for the title of the song to appear in the lyric — it doesn't. It was written as 'Love And Learn Blues' but when Gershwin realised three previous songs had been called 'Love And Learn' he opted for a title change.

DIXIE (Film). This was Bing's first "Three Colour" Technicolour film. The first colour feature he made, "King Of Jazz" was shot in the "Two Colour" process. For the first time audiences had the opportunity to see the singer in his true colours, albeit slightly garish. At this stage of the development of colour film stock, Technicolour insisted on protecting their patent by assigning a consultant/colour director to every film which used their process. In this case it

was Natalie Kalmus. You find her name on the credits of Technicolour movies up until the end of the 'forties. She shunned realistic colour in favour of 'Chocolate Box Cover' brash. This suited the tenor of this nineteenth century tale based loosely on the life of Daniel Decatur Emmett (1815-1904). Bing played him as simply Dan Emmett. Emmett wrote songs for the then popular Minstrel Shows, although his only original compositions sung by Bing in the film were 'Dixie' and 'Old Dan Tucker'. Minstrels were invariably caucasian actors in black face. The Johnny Burke — James Van Heusen song 'Kinda Peculiar Brown' says it all. It was omitted from the release print, supposedly because of the sensitive racial elements in the story. When Channel Four programmed a showing in 1985 it turned out to be a charming, inoffensive tale with Crosby treating us to eight songs including the film's hit ballad: 'Sunday, Monday or Always.' The plot is straight off the Hollywood shelf: struggling composer (Bing) finally makes it big. Having to make the difficult decision along the way of choosing between Dorothy Lamour and Marjorie Reynolds. For once, Dottie came in second. The film was made and released in 1943.

DIXIE (Song) Featured in the film of the same name, it is Dan Emmett's (Bing's) most treasured compostion. When he tries to sell his compositions he refuses to include 'Dixie' in the job lot for which a publisher paid a hundred dollars. The publisher is only willing to pay one dollar for 'Dixie' and Bing knows it is his finest composition. Yet it is not well received by audiences, and it takes Bing's sweetheart (Marjorie Reynolds) to convince Bing that it should be played and sung at a faster tempo. When it is, the audience take to it immediately. As always, the non-Hollywood version is different. 'Dixie' was written by Emmett in 1859 for a New York Minstrel Show. He sold it without difficulty for the then handsome price of five hundred dollars. It went on to break the bounds of the musical stage and became the anthem of the Southern States during the American Civil War. Bing did not make a studio recording of the song.

DOCTOR RHYTHM. Film. This 1938 Paramount Picture starred Bing as Doctor Bill Remsen. He is one of four high school colleagues who meet up with a fifth, a keeper at Central Park Zoo, who allows them access to the zoo after hours. This opening establishes the quintet as ex-relay team members who will still do anything to help each other. Hence Bing ends up posing as Patrolman O'Roon (Andy Devine) when the latter is unable to report for duty following a bite from a sea-lion. All the character ingredients for a late 'thirties musical comedy are present:

a) The wealthy eccentric widow (Beatrice Lillie)
b) Her beautiful niece and heiress (Mary Carlisle)
c) The villainous crook and gambler interested in b) for her inheritance (Fred Keating)
d) The handsome leading man (whose masquerades as a policeman) creates humourous plot complications (Bing Crosby)

In keeping with the plots of this era:

i) The leading man sings three romantic ballads
ii) The 'real' policeman received promotion and a reward
iii) The wealthy eccentric performs her party piece (Beatrice Lillie doing her popular 'Double Dozen Damask Dinner Napkins')
iv) The villainous crook and gambler is exposed and arrested
v) The boy gets the girl.

DOLAN, ROBERT EMMETT (1908-1972). Composer, Musical Director, Producer for the whole of the 1940s — cinema's most popular decade — just about every Bing Crosby film featured Dolan's name on the credits. He was signed up by Paramount in 1940 and the following year received his first mention as musical supervisor/director on 'Birth Of The Blues.' A further dozen Paramount Pictures in which Bing appeared followed, for which Dolan was billed as Musical Director or credited with the musical scoring. For the record, the films were:

Holiday Inn (1942)
Star Spangled Rhythm (1942)
Dixie (1943)
Going My Way (1944)
Here Come The Waves (1944)
Duffy's Tavern (1945)
Road To Utopia (1946)
Blue Skies (1946)
Welcome Stranger (1947)
My Favourite Brunette (1947)
Road To Rio (1948)
Top O' The Morning (1949)

So close was his musical relationship with Bing, that when Crosby defected to RKO for a one-off picture deal Dolan followed. Thus 'Bells Of St. Mary's' (1945) maintained a successful artistic and box office partnership. The link with Bing and Paramount Pictures spilled over into the next decade, when Dolan produced 'White Christmas' (1954) and 'Anything Goes' (1956). He then returned to his first love, the stage, from whence he came before Paramount beckoned.

DONLEVY, BRIAN (1899-1972). Actor. In 'Birth Of The Blues', it was Donlevy who made it all happen. As Memphis, he was the cornet player who was released from Jail due to Bing's ingenuity. The All White Jazz Band that subsequently fell together provided the framework for the ensuing plot. Donlevy and Bing had separate cameo roles in 'Duffy's Tavern' (1945). The short, stumpy actor had a more colourful career before he made his film debut in 1924. The son of an Irish whiskey distiller he fought against Pancho Villa and then lied about his age and became a pilot with the famous Lafayette Escadrille in the first world war. He was in films for forty five years and leaves behind a legacy of mainly forgettable performances. The sadistic sergeant in 'Beau Geste' (1939) found him at his acting peak, and in the same year he appeared in 'Jesse James', 'Union Pacific', 'Behind Prison Gates' and 'Destry Rides Again.' By the early 'fifties he took leads in cheaply made 'B' pictures such as 'Cry In The Night' (1956) or character parts in the likes of 'Never So Few' (1959). Before calling it quits he was in the last three 'Formula' westerns which came out of Hollywood: 'Waco' (1966), 'Hostile Guns' (1968) and 'Arizona Bushwackers' (1968). His screen career ended with 'Pit Stop' (1969).

THE DONOVANS (Song). Early in the film 'Top O' The Morning' (1949), Bing attends a party at the house of his friendly Irish foil (Barry Fitzgerald). Bing then leads the guests in a spirited rendition of 'The Donovans'. -The song was composed by the 'Where Are They Now' (And Who Were They Then) team of Francis A. Fahy and Alicia Adelaide Needham. The hummable ditty was recorded by Bing for Decca in June of 1949.

DON'T BE A DO-BADDER (Song). The film 'Robin And The 7 Hoods' had half a dozen scenes which were staged in such a way that they commanded the attention of the audience from the first note to the last. 'Don't Be A Do-Badder' was one such opus. Bing, in his role as Allen A-Dale, visits a children's orphanage. With strong support from the kids, he sings the Sammy Cahn — James Van Heusen composition. The number is reprised by Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Sammy Davis Jr. at the end of the film. It is an amusing closing scene as a wealthy Crosby hands out gifts to the three singing performers who are attired in Santa Claus outfits.

DON'T FENCE ME IN. (Song). In the Paramount short 'Swinging With The Stars' (1944) Bing attempts to generate a cinema singsong. He is joined by servicemen as he sings 'Don't Fence Me In' whilst a bouncing ball follows the lyrics at the bottom of the screen. The song started life as a poem written by Montana miner, Robert Fletcher. Cole Porter

paid $150 for the rights and adapted the lyrics for a film called 'Adios Argentina.' That film was never made but Warner Brothers used it in 'Hollywood Canteen' in 1944. Both Roy Rogers with the Sons of the Pioneers and The Andrews Sisters tackled it in that picture. The following year the song's hit parade popularity resulted in Republic Pictures using it as the title of one of their Roy Rogers series of westerns and the Singing Cowboy got to sing it again to cinemagoers. By then Bing had recorded the song with The Andrews Sisters for Decca which ensured its presence on every 'Greatest Hits' compilation issued under his name.

DON'T HOOK NOW- Film. This 1942 short film was made for the Professional Golfers Association of America using the facilities of Paramount Pictures. Because Everett Crosby was co-producer it was inevitable that brother Bing would feature prominently., It was filmed at Bing's Pro-Am Golf Tournament held at Rancho Sante Fe in January of 1942. He sang 'Tomorrow's My Lucky Day' in the film.

DON'T LET THE MOON GET AWAY. Song. In 'Sing You Sinners' Bing visits a roadside nightclub with girlfriend Ellen Drew. He is recognised by bandleader Harry Barris and sings the James V. Monaco — Johnny Burke composition to a delighted audience. Such is its popularity with the nightclubbers he is pressed to give the song a brief reprise. If they wanted to hear it a third time they would have to buy the Decca recording made in July 1938 in readiness for the film's premiere the following month.

D'ORSAY, FIFI (1904 -) Actress. As Lili Yvonne in 'Going Hollywood' (1933) Fifi D'O started the film as Bing's fiancee and then proceeded to lose him to Marion Davies. Quite right too, as Davies' Sugar Daddy William Randolph Hearst was bankrolling the film. Miss D'Orsay entered films in 1929 opposite Will Rogers in 'They Had To See Paris.' She had been in showbusiness since the age of 19 when she entered the profession at the bottom as a chorus girl. Possibly because she was a French-Canadian she was regularly cast as a Parisienne sex symbol. She was active in films through to the 1960s: 'What A Way To Go' (1964), 'The Art Of Love' (1965) and 'Assignment To Kill' (1968). By then she was spending more time lecturing on religion and apart from a nostalgic comeback in the Broadway musical 'Follies' in 1971 she was contented to leave the entertainment side of showbusiness behind her.

★★★

HOORAY FOR HOLLYWOOD!

An advertisement for this year's tour to Hollywood organised by member Clive Roberts is shown on page 21 and as promised in our last edition, we have persuaded Gwen Harvey to tell us about last year's trip.

★★★

What a mammoth task the Editor has set me! For one whose memory is failing and who finds it difficult to string together a few phrases and make sense, it's almost impossible. However such is my regard for Harry Lillis that I'll try to recall the all important Bing aspects of the Starline tour.

Jennie Mills and I met up at Heathrow on Monday 4th October 1993. We saw no sign of the other four Crosby people until, on boarding our plane, we sighted and exchanged 'Hellos' with Dennis and Jean Saville. The flight was long but very comfortable. Virgin Airlines extended great hospitality to all passengers and meals were really good. On landing at Los Angeles airport, we found outselves queuing next to June and Gordon Manton. Thus the whole Bing contingent was complete.

Common sense prevailed and it was obvious that with only six people, a Bing tour would have involved far too much expense to be plausible. I feel I must state here and now that on every trip it had been pointed out by Clive Roberts of Starline Tours that Crosby people were aboard. Every effort was then made by the tour guides to point out every possible item that might be of interest to us. When we were introduced to Johnny Grant (Hon. Mayor of Hollywood), he told us how Bing got him a part in 'White Christmas' after he had worked with Bing and Bob Hope on a very successful Telethon televised from El Capitan Theatre in 1952 (Bing's first TV appearance).

On a tour of L.A., a lot of items on my personal list of visiting places were pointed out to us, e.g.:-

- ★ Grauman's Chinese Theatre where Bing received his Oscar and where of course his hand and foot-prints appear on the forecourt outside.
- ★ Bing's three stars on the Walk of Fame (radio, records and films).
- ★ The Montmartre Cafe where Bing appeared with the Rhythm Boys and where he and Dixie first met.
- ★ Doolittle Theatre where Bing appeared when it was the Lux Radio Theatre and opposite what now remains of the famous Brown Derby where our man often lunched when working on his KMH radio programme.
- ★ The waxworks where we saw a figure of Bing.
- ★ The Hollywood Bowl — it was a great thrill to enter this and imagine that vast audience sitting enthralled whilst listening to Bing, but what a climb to get to the entrance. Worth it though.
- ★ The church on Sunset where Bing and Dixie were married.
- ★ The famous Lakeside golf course which we saw when we visited Universal Studios.

Two little things I didn't have on my list which we saw were:-

- ★ The school which the 4 boys of Bing's first marriage attended.
- ★ A house used in the filming of **Mississippi**. Remember where Joan Bennett lived? Well it is a real house and quite beautiful too.

Of course we visited Holy Cross where we saw the graves of Bing, Dixie, and his parents, and also the grave of Lindsay. Although only Lindsay's name appears, I believe the ashes of Dennis are also interred with his brother. We also looked out the grave of Philip's son, Brian, who died riding a motor bike under the influence of drugs.

On an expedition to a Collectors shop, I got carried away with pictures of Bing and wonder of wonders, when I asked they brought out some very early ones of Dixie. I hadn't brought out enough money, so I was borrowing left right and centre until I got back to the Roosevelt Hotel. I can tell you I was on Cloud 9!

Naturally all the studio visits were fabulous but to actually walk the hallowed ground of Paramount! Well — what can I say? Seeing so many things like the front where Bing and Bob often played golf — remember Variety Girl? We saw a replica of Bing's Oscar and also a picture of him when we entered. The highlight was being allowed to enter the office of the VIP producer, A.C. Lyles. He occupies the office which was once the domain of Fred Astaire and has pictures of himself with every famous star covering the walls. Bing is of course in a prominent position.

Gwen in Bing tee shirt meets A.C. Lyles. Bing's photo is just to the right above Gwen's head.

After we left A.C., as everybody called him, we had lunch and then onto the souvenir shop. Clive Roberts came rushing in and said A.C. wanted to see me. I thought he was kidding but our guide followed him saying A.C. was asking for the lady who spent so much money on pictures of Bing and Dixie. Evidently Clive had related the tale and Mr. Lyles couldn't believe that anybody would spend so much on pictures. Good job he didn't know that I found more pictures after that in other shops. Anyhow he talked to us about Bing and was very interesting. I thought how kind of him it was to vacate his office to come and find us. I had asked him when in his office if he knew what had become of the two short films Bing made for Paramount. I'd recognised a scene from **Please** in the video 'The Magic Of Bing Crosby'. He said funnily enough that Mary Frances had asked him the same question the week before. Evidently she is trying to have made a mini series on her dad similar to the one Tina Sinatra did.

On another trip, we caught sight of signs saying Rancho Santa Fe which meant a great deal to us Crosby fans and then we saw Bing's beloved Del Mar race track. We saw so many other non-Bing things but on the last day the gilt on the gingerbread was having Bob Hope himself visit the Roosevelt for a press conference. Due to Clive's influence, we were allowed in which was a great thrill. Dolores was with him and he looks so well for 90 years of age. I didn't get his autograph myself but I did manage to shake hands with him. Seeing so many English people Bob wanted to know if they were evacuating England! However he was clearly touched by the greeting we gave him.

I think that this was a fitting end to a marvellous holiday. By the way, one member of a very mixed but lovely crowd of people on the tour, had actually interviewed Bing when he was making his last Christmas show in England. Hope this gives some idea of the courtesy and kindness we received on the tour, not only on these Bing related incidents I might add.

Gwen Harvey

Bob Hope talks to his British fans. June Manton is in the forefront of the picture on the left.

★★★

One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters received since the last issue.

George Patmore, 53 Severn Way, Cressage, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY5 6DS.

. . . At the Civic Theatre in Whitchurch, North Shropshire on Saturday 27th November, there was a variety show "The Jolson and Crosby Show". I wasn't able to go due to a previous engagement and I wonder if it's on tour in which case I might catch up with it.

It's great to know that at last we are to get Bing commemorative stamps from US Mail.

(Editor: I hadn't heard about the show before but more knowledgeable members tell me that it is now in its 3rd or 4th year of touring around the country. Roy Chappell takes the Bing role and Steve King the Jolson part. It is said to be well done and is well received wherever it appears. It is indeed good news about the stamps.

We don't normally publish anonymous letters but the following which was received on letter paper presumably stolen from the Grapevine office has an important response to Clive Menaadue's letter in the last BING)

Anonymous, 39 Kings Rd., Teddington, Middlesex, TW11 0QD.

Referring to the letter contained in BING 105 and written by Clyde Menadue, may I — as a devoted follower and founder member of the David Bowie Appreciation Society — take extreme exception to his comments on a singular artist.

An evening or two ago, while attending our annual "We're Divvy Over Dave" get-together, in a telephone kiosk just off Brompton Rd., the entire membership of the DBAS passed a resolution deploring this unfortunate affair. Can either of you be aware of the international distress occasioned by this infamous attack or its effect on **Our Dave** aficionados such as Arthur Blood, Jim Reilly, Girvan Patterson and a voluminous mailbag which has expressed the similar views of over 2000 ICC members. All very well your saying you wish to hear no more on the matter but what of Jim's recent investment in flairs, gold lame underwear and an extensive nose job, or Arthur's Yuletide triumph of 5000 consecutive spinnings of 'Little Drummer Boy'? This man Menadue deserves a sound horsewhipping and in the event no horse can be prevailed to undertake the task, let me be your first volunteer.

Finally. "A damp rag" indeed! Dave was wearing the merest hint of Blush No. 5 and a smidgen of 'Midnight Haze' eye-shadow as his flawless complexion requires no other. Glancing through today's received copy of BING 105, page 12 indicates that few of those portrayed thereon would have dared confront the camera minus resort to the make-up box. You are a fine one to talk is all I can say!

Furious, Teddington

(Editor: I wonder who it was?)

Jim Reilly, 27 Beaulieu Rd., North End, Portsmouth PO 2 0ND.

. . . My main reason for writing is to congratulate George O'Reilly and all others involved in the production of his newly released CD "A Little Bit Of Irish". This is a first class album which has made an excellent addition to my collection. It is worth obtaining for those lovely Victor Herbert songs alone. Bing is also in fine voice for all the Irish songs. The inclusion of the John McCormack section is a very rare piece of Crosbyana. I hope that all our members will support this project by buying either the CD or the audio cassette as a great deal of time, effort and money must have gone into its production.

(Editor: I agree wholeheartedly with Jim's comments. The album is available from Derek Parkes in either CD or cassette form. Buy it while you can.)

Greg Van Beek, 929 Hillcrest St., West Bend, W1 53095, USA.

BING 105 is just great — the quality of the publication and the marvellous photos never cease to amaze me. Do you have any information as to where the great cover shot came from? It looks like a publicity shot for one of the Hollywood Palace shows. I know that on the 1965 Palace Xmas show Bing wears a white tuxedo.

This Christmas season, the music video of Bing and David Bowie was played often, even on Christmas Eve and Day, on both music video channels (VH-1 and MTV). MTV plays nothing but Rap, Heavy Metal Rock etc., so when I found Bing on it, it came as a shock. No matter what Clive Menadue says, I think Bing's last Christmas show was his best — a lovely way to exit. Granted, Bing did look somewhat tired and his facial lines were deep and pronounced, but nevertheless the magic was still there. It would probably upset Clive to hear Bing's comments about David Bowie while being interviewed on Pete Murray's radio show in September 1977. Bing said David "sounds great, he's

got a great voice." Bing goes on to say that David "reads lines very good, he could be a good actor, I would think." Don't get me wrong, I'm not a David Bowie fan by any means, but as a result of that duet, Bing gets some positive publicity each Christmas and his 'magic' is being exposed to more people my age (21) and younger via the music video channels on TV.

On the Pete Murray interviews, Bing even mentioned that there was talk of issuing his duet with Bowie on record and when it did happen in 1982, it got to the no 3 position in the British charts. Everyone had their own preferences. I prefer Bing's voice from the mid 1940s on, particularly in the 1970s. I like his 1977 recording of 'June In January' better than the original. Clive Menadue obviously prefers the early Bing, but I think he should go a little easy on criticising Bing's last show. His style and charm flowed just as easily as it always had, not to mention the dulcet tones. I respect Clive's opinion, we all have one, and I'm not out to give him a hard time. What he said about Bing bringing joy to people throughout his career and his "unsurpassed ability to attract and entertain people of all ages and nationalities" is 100% true, and I couldn't agree more.

(Editor: Thanks Greg, for some sincerely held views. The cover photo of BING 105 was probably the November 20th 1965 Hollywood Palace show but we suspect that the Christmas show for 1965 was taped at the same time so you could be right as well. The shot of Bing carving a turkey is perhaps more likely to be relevant to Thanksgiving Day in the USA rather than Christmas which would tie in with our theory. The mystery deepens because an almost identical photo contains a reference to Bing's co-star Diahann Carroll (20th November show) and Bob Newhart (1/1/66 show). Perhaps Bob Newhart was edited out of the November show and re-used in the New Year's Day show. We'll probably never know.

We do all have our particular preferences for Bing's voice and so that you all know, I think that he was at his best as a singer from 1938 to 1940. I can listen to the Bing of any age quite happily though.

I have to say that the Letter pages have become even more interesting since Clive Menadue's arrival amongst us. Without his contributions and the subsequent replies, we should have had a much reduced Letters section in the last few issues! Clive has done some broadcasting himself and also he has quite a nice way with a song. I have heard a tape of his pleasant baritone running through several of Bing's old songs and it's not bad. Clive's latest foray into our pages follows:)

Clive Menadue, 21 Sunny Bank, Pyle, Mid-Glamorgan CF33 6LW.

Thanks for the December edition of BING which interested me more than any previous number in my short but controversial career as a member of the ICC. There were many and various reasons for this and one of them was the letter from Les Brice who remembered watching a TV programme that featured a link up with Bing during which a very rushed version of 'True Love' was sung by him to a backing provided by the studio orchestra which was in fact conducted by Eric Robinson who had a regular show in the fifties.

I remember that the suggestion that he sing the song over the link up seemed to surprise Bing to some extent and he resisted Robinson's blandishment for some time insisting that he didn't have his pitch pipe available among other things. Robinson said that they had prepared an arrangement in Bing's key and at that point Bing seemed to decide to make the best of a bad job and galloped into the song at a terrific pace leaving a struggling orchestra far behind him and the whole project collapsed into a total disaster.

Personally I feel that Eric Robinson was very foolish to spring something like that on Bing and got what he deserved but there's another story attached to this that might possibly explain Bing's reluctance to co-operate on that occasion.

Some years earlier, in 1949 to be exact, Bing recorded a song called 'The Four Winds And The Seven Seas' and Eric Robinson was at that time writing a regular column as the resident music critic for the Daily Express. He reviewed this record and was quite scathing about what he saw as a marked deterioration of Bing's high notes at that time and remarked that the 'lift' in Bing's upper register had become a 'wail' in recent years!

Some helpful person must have sent a copy of this to Bing and much to my surprise he replied in person to Mr. Robinson and the Express in a letter which they printed and in which Bing **agreed** with the criticism levelled at him and remarked that he couldn't understand why his own voice had deteriorated so rapidly when people like Jolson had retained their powers to a much greater age!

I had always put the faults in his singing at this stage in his career down to a lack of enthusiasm for what he was doing as he went on to make many fine and beautifully sung records long after these few lean years and, as everyone is now aware, my own feeling about a loss of ease and power in his voice did not surface until a good many years later and not everyone agrees that there was anything wrong even at this stage in his long and illustrious career. I can't help wondering though if Bing remembered that critical article and decided to extract a little personal revenge when the opportunity presented itself.

Bing wouldn't have done that though would he? Or would he . . . ?

(Editor: So, Clive remembers that it was Eric Robinson who interviewed Bing on TV. I believe that it was not until 1967 that satellite television pictures were beamed between USA and the UK so presumably the link-up was audio only. Who else remembers the show? Read on!)

Stan White, 57 Stanley St., Rothwell, Kettering, Northamptonshire NN14 6EA.

The letter from Les Brice regarding a British Orchestra trying to accompany Bing on TV singing "True Love" reminds me of a similar thing on BBC Radio. It was Cyril Stapleton and the BBC Showband with announcer Rikki Fulton and the song may well have been "True Love" as it was around at that time. They had Bing on the phone presumably from his home, singing the song and they tried to accompany him. It was a disaster!

As for "Deep Purple" as remembered by Ron Pearson, I first heard the song in one of those 'All Star' Hollywood morale boosting films from the war years probably sung by Roy Rogers. I liked the song and it came as quite a pleasant surprise when I first heard Bing sing it in one of those BBC 15 minute "Bing Sings" programmes. I was able to purchase the Brunswick 78 and it has always been a Bing favourite with me. I quite agree that it is lovely to have it on the **On Treasure Island CD**, even more so as it was one of the songs I listed when Richard Hart asked members which songs they would choose for the CD.

(Editor: Hmm. Cyril Stapleton on the radio doing the same thing. Does the next letter give us the definitive answer?)

Alan Chadwick, 3 Mortimer Close, Hartley, Wintney, Nr. Basingstoke, Hants RG27 8EL.

Re the letter in BING 105 regarding the omission of Bing singing 'True Love' on TV in the 50s. I have the audio of this spot and it is with Cyril Stapleton who was doing a programme called Music Box or something similar. Bing did not appear visually but there was a sound connection with him in the USA and after some chat, Bing sang a few lines of 'True Love' with the orchestra in the TV studios endeavouring to accompany. There were probably some photos of Bing screened during this and presumably this is the reason why it was not listed as a TV appearance.

(Editor: So does this clear up the mystery? Developments are awaited. As you will read in Bert Bishop's section, one DJ who is doing a tremendous job in playing Bing's records on the BBC's Eastern Counties network is Paul Barnes. Paul has recently joined the ICC and it is pleasure to quote the following extract from his covering letter.)

Paul Barnes, Norwich

. . . I always refer on air to Bing as The Boss. One of the bonuses arising from doing the radio programme is the chance to reappraise music which over the years one has been inclined to take for granted. I'm grateful to 'Stan the Man' (White) and others such as Les Gaylor and Ernest Sutkowski for persuading me to redirect my attention to the work of The Boss.

Among the qualities I look for in the music I play on the programme are charm , wit and joy. There's an abundance of such qualities in the Crosby canon. What pleasure! I must confess that I have had time only to glance at BING 104 so far, but it promises fascinating reading. Illuminating too, just the sort of thing I can scavenge to make me appear more knowledgeable on the wireless!

Robert C. Achorn, 41 Johnson Rd., Sutton, MA 01590-2305, USA.

There is a suggestion in Lionel's Lines that Bing altered Irving Berlin's line in 'All By Myself' about 'a table and a chair' turning it — for some mysterious reason — into 'a cosy Morris chair'. My impression is that 'Morris chair' was the original lyric as published by Berlin in 1921. Certainly the line was so sung by Eddie Cantor, Rudy Vallee and the others in the '30s. It appears to be one of those situations in which, by the '50s, audiences (1) couldn't understand the phrase 'Morris chair' or (2) if they understood the words, didn't know what they meant. Hence the simpler, but less vivid, 'a table and a chair'. Al Jolson was using the latter approach by the late 40s. Berlin was attentive to detail, was involved in the production of 'Blue Skies' and presumably saw to it that his basic lyric ('Morris chair') was used in the film, as it was.

Over the years, there was much talk about Crosby's favorite song. Sometimes he ducked the question; sometimes he made the safe easy choice of 'Stardust'. My memory of one radio broadcast (probably 11 June 1947) is that he introduced a song something like this: "People often ask about my favorite song and I say I haven't picked just one. But I'm sure the following number is among my top five favorites." He then sang the lovely Dietz — Schwartz ballad **Something to Remember You By** written in 1930. The strange part of this is that he ignored the song all through the 30s and didn't record it commercially until 1975 — 28 years after calling it one of his favorite five.

This suggests a couple of possibilities: (a) that he had little control over, or interest in, what he recorded, and didn't push his own favorites, or (b) that in 1947 he was simply reading a radio script thrust in front of him by Bill Morrow or somebody, and that he wasn't as dedicated to that particular number. The latter seems a bit more likely.

We all know that Crosby dubbed the singing voice for Eddie Bracken in 'Out Of This World' in 1945. Did Paramount use the same gimmick 10 years ealier? The 1993 'Movie Song Catalog' compiled by Ruth Benjamin and Arthur Rosenblatt, suggests the possibility. It is a comprehensive, well researched book, although not without a slip or two. It credits Crosby with providing the singing voice for an actor named Paul Newlan in a 1935 film "Millions in the Air". That was a low-budget Paramount musical starring Robert Cummings, Eleanore Whitney ('The World's Fastest Tap Dancer') and the Broadway comedy team of Willie and Eugene Howard, among others. In the film, Cummings gives another push to Crosby's hit, 'Love Is Just Around The Corner', introduced a few

months earlier in 'Here Is My Heart'.

The 'Movie Song Catalog' contends that Crosby provided the voice for Newlan for one number, 'Crooner's Lullaby'. That was written by Sam Coslow and Arthur Johnston, two Crosby writers for 'The Big Broadcast of 1936' which was released in 1935. As far as I know, Crosby didn't sing it in that film, didn't use it on the radio and didn't record it. Perhaps he had cut a soundtrack that Paramount borrowed for 'Millions In The Air'. Or maybe it never happened. Newlan, by the way, was a relatively obscure actor who turned up in a bit part in Crosby's 'Road To Utopia' 11 years later. The standard references don't show 'Millions In The Air' as a film with any Crosby involvement but the 'Movie Song Catalog' does. Who knows?

(Editor: What an interesting letter! Robert has only joined us recently and he raises some fascinating queries. First of all, the lyrics of 'All By Myself'. Typically Lionel carried out some further research and he commented:-

"I have found 5 different examples of sheet music which all say 'cosy Morris Chair' but this proves nothing, as they all appear to be modern copies. Apart from Bing's, I have so far found 4 other versions in my own collection and the result at present is a draw - Ella and Nat sing 'table and chair' but The Mills Bros and Teresa Brewer go for the other option. However, I have no doubt that your correspondent will be absolutely right, he sounds like a fellow who 'knows his onions' but I still prefer the later (?) line, 'a table and chair' as it seems more synonymous with the stark loneliness that is supposed to be expressed. And as for playing 'Solitaire' (remember this is 'American' for the card game 'Patience' and not our board game with the wooden pegs and holes) from the subterranean depths of a Morris chair - very awkward."

Turning to 'Something To Remember You By', I'd bet that Bing did like the song as he sang it three times on the Kraft Music Hall (and also on Command Performance I think) plus twice on Philco and once on GEC before recording it commercially. Whether it really was one of his top five favourites, we'll never know.

Finally to 'Millions In The Air' and Keith Parkinson offers his thoughts'

"Not having seen the film, I can't comment on the use of Bing's voice in this film with any authority. However 'Millions In The Air' was released in 1935 and the book "The Paramount Story' gives the storyline:

"Daughter of the Radio Amateur Hour's sponsor enters the show incognito, teams up with a singing salesman and wins."

As a musical there is scope for shoehorning Bing's voice into the plot to provide a miming opportunity, but it seems to have been a 'B' picture programme filler which would have sold Bing's talents short had he been used. Surely Paramount would have publicised the use of their top star's voice in the film if it had been so. As for the song "Crooner's Lullaby", does anyone have a recording of this by any vocalist? One lesson I've learned over the years however is never to be dismissive about possible Bing Crosby film appearances as there are still undocumented Crosby performances out there. I just doubt that this is the 'reel' thing."

Thanks Keith and we look forward to further letters from Robert Achorn. If anyone has seen 'Millions In The Air' recently don't hesitate to let us know the answer!)

Tony Peverett, 7 Burgh Mount, Banstead, Surrey SM7 1ER.

Many congratulations to Ken Barnes for the new version of 'A Couple of Song and Dance Men', now released on CD as 'How Lucky Can You Get'. I was never too happy with the original LP, the Orchestra being a bit noisy in places and so I didn't play it much. However, as Ken Barnes says in the CD booklet: "This release is a different — and better — presentation of the original album. For one thing it has been completely remixed from the original multi-tracks and digitally remastered using alternative takes and portions of alternative takes . . . "

All I can say is that it certainly *is* better. I now thoroughly enjoy listening to it and have played the CD quite a few times already. Ken Barnes efforts were indeed worthwhile.

(Editor: I can only echo Tony's comments.)

Charles Wilkinson, 8 Old Coach Lane, Belfast BT9

I was delighted to read that John Joyce is considering re-printing **Bing Crosby and the Bing Crosby Style.** I have just written to John requesting a copy when published. I also mentioned to John that **The Story of Bing Crosby** by Ted Crosby should also be out of copyright in 1996. I asked John to re-consider re-printing this book as I am sure that there are many members who would want the book. I would be grateful if this suggestion could be printed in BING.

(Editor: A nice suggestion Charles and we'll see what John has to say in due course.)

Ken Crossland, 9 Arden Drive, Dorridge, Solihull B93 8LP.

I recently had the occasion to visit the London office of the video company ITC. These are the people who released "Bing Crosby's Merrie Olde Christmas" in 1992. They mentioned to me whilst I was there that the Bing video had sold very well and that they would be pleased to consider another release. Their repertoire is drawn entirely from the back catalogues of the various TV companies. They do have however, "Bing Crosby's White Christmas" from 1976 and more interestingly, the Pasadena Concert (the full version) "Fifty Years In Ninety Minutes" which of course ITV showed after Bing's death.

I encouraged them to release the latter because of its year round appeal, plus of course, it's the nearest thing to a film of Bing's Palladium concerts, which so many people remember. A few letters from members might well be productive. The address is ITC Entertainment Group, Academy House, 161-167 Oxford St., London W1R 1TA.

(Editor: Thanks Ken for the suggestion. Let's get writing! Incidentally, Ken has been working closely with EMI on a CD release called "The Best of Michael Holliday". This is in the shops (price £9.79) and it contains some interesting alternate and unissued takes as well as the more familiar tracks. Pretty impressive stuff by Ken.)

D-DAY, 6th JUNE 1944

As the fiftieth anniversary of this great event approaches, we can rightfully expect much attention to be focused on those epic days in 1944. We covered Bing's contribution to the entertainment of the troops in Europe in BING 99 and since then some additional information has come to hand plus a nice article from Albert Harvey. First of all, let's remind ourselves of the background.

Bing makes the following comment in **Call Me Lucky.**

"Once in a while I've been asked what has been the most satisfying and rewarding experience in my career. The answer is readily available. Nothing I've ever done stands out like my trips overseas to entertain the troops in England and France during the last war. If I never do anything else, I'll always take satisfaction in knowing that I helped some of our soldiers relax for a few moments when they needed amusement and entertainment."

Bing arrived in the UK on August 25th 1944 and then travelled by train from Glasgow to London. He reported to the American HQ on Saturday August 26th and we have since discovered that he played golf at Wentworth on the Sunday morning before going on to Sunningdale Golf Club in the afternoon. His partners were Andrew McNair, Frances Ricardo and Commander Winston Guest. Bing's handicap was 3 at that time. As we know, on the Sunday evening he recorded the Variety Bandbox show for the BBC and member Albert Harvey was amongst the crowd outside the stage door. He has written an article describing his experience which has also been published in the Glenn Miller fan club magazine in view of its content.

MEMORIES OF BING AND GLENN MILLER IN 1944

It was in the autumn of 1940 that a friend asked me if I would be interested in collecting autographs. At the time I didn't think it was a very exciting idea, on the other hand in those wartime days there was little one could do in their leisure time, because the government had put restrictions on concentrated gatherings of people (this was to avoid large numbers of casualties during air attack). Many theatres and cinemas were closed and those that did operate were open for a few hours in the daylight hours. By 7 pm most people were in the air raid shelters for the night. So I decided I would try this pastime. Little did I realise at the time what great pleasure was in store for me.

We started in a small way visiting the local variety theatre and were successful to get the signatures of that great old comedian Dickie Henderson Snr., (to my surprise he stood talking to us for five minutes or so) then his son Dickie Henderson Jnr and his daughters the Henderson Twins, a very popular singing duo at the time. I was now hooked on the hobby, and saw the possibilities of meeting some of those band leaders and singers whom I had been admiring on the radio.

We started travelling up to London every Sunday afternoon to the Queensberry All-Services Club which operated at the London Casino in London (now called the Prince Edward). This was the venue for Variety Bandbox broadcasts where all the stars performed for the entertainment of members of the forces and was a great location for autograph collectors. Geraldo's band were often there, Bebe Daniels and Ben Lyon, who would invite some of us to have tea with them at their London flat. There was a nice little girl, ten years old, who arrived in a taxi with her father, whose hand I held while he paid the driver. She signed my book Petula Clark. Another girl who arrived with her mother and father who signed Julie Andrews and many more British stars from James Mason to Richard Tauber.

When America came into the war we went into another dimension, we now had the opportunity to acquire the signatures of the Legends of Hollywood

and the Big Bands of America. The first success in this field was Bob Hope who chatted for a few minutes with the odd joke or two. A number of other great stars followed, Edward G. Robinson, Adolph Menjou, Dinah Shore, The Merry Macs, etc.

The news came that Glenn Miller and the A.E.F. Band were coming to England and they arrived in the summer of 1944. The information was that they were to broadcast on the Variety Bandbox show, and we were, as usual there that Sunday afternoon. Most of the band were standing outside the stage door and were very friendly. Ray McKinley had a chat with me, as did Mel Powell, Peanuts Hucko, Johnny Desmond and other members of the band.

I must make special mention of Broderick Crawford who was with the band, because it was with his help that I was able to meet Glenn Miller. Broderick was concerned that us three or four young people who had a genuine interest in the band and its activities should meet Glenn and he was very aware that Glenn would not be leaving the theatre by the stage door. So while we were all at the stage door, Broderick kept an eye on the front of the theatre and when he was sure that Glenn was leaving, he took us to the door that Glenn was leaving by.

Glenn was pleased to sign for us and because a number of passers-by wanted to join in, he insisted we formed a queue. I was second in line. I offered my note-book and pen.

Glenn said "Would you mind if I use my own pen", I replied "Certainly not". Glenn signed my book. I said "Thank you Glenn", Glenn replied "Thank you for your interest in the band and good luck". What a moment! I was so thrilled that I had met my idol, and for three or four days I could think of nothing else but my meeting Glenn.

Well you may think I had my share of good fortune as a Miller fan, not at all, there was more to come. Just a few weeks later at the Plaza Cinema in Lower Regent Street, London, the British premiere of the Bing Crosby film "Going My Way" was shown and I was lucky to have tickets for the performance. On stage was Glenn Miller and the A.E.F. Band. I never even noticed the air raid going on outside. It was certainly all happening for me at this time. Bing Crosby arrived in London 26th August and broadcast on Variety Band-box. He arrived at the Stage door and as he edged his way through the gathering, we rubbed shoulders and I said "Good luck Bing" to which he replied "Thank you". To speak to my two idols in the space of a few weeks was beyond my wildest dreams. Bing recorded with Glenn on 29th and 30th August in Bedford and left for France on 1st September.

I wrote to Glenn around the end of October to thank him for the performance at the Plaza and to ask for an autographed photograph. His reply arrived at the end of November. He thanked me for my letter and my interest and went on to explain that the United States Army did not permit their officers to send out photo-graphs. The letter was signed Alton G. Miller (Major). We are all very aware of what happened a few weeks later.

If I could use the words Glenn used in one of his last broadcast interviews, in such a short period "I have lived a lifetime of wonderful experiences".

Albert Harvey

Thanks for a nice memory, Albert. The Daily Mail had plenty of coverage of Bing's visit that week. First of all it had announced in its August 24th edition that Bing was expected that weekend commenting that his earnings in 1943 had been £225,000. There did seem to be great fascination about Bing's wealth at that time. The following week, on August 31st, there was a long article on his career and a cartoon showing Bing singing in Berkeley Square. In BING 99, we recorded how Bing had taken part in the opening of the Stage Door Canteen on Thursday August 31st and the photograph from Ron Bosley on the next page shows Bing in action at that event. The Daily Mail indicates the black-out that night was 9.17 PM until 6.43 AM which may explain Bing's story of being lost in the dark with Broderick Crawford during the week.

The Daily Mail also cleared up one mystery for us as it confirmed that Bing visited a hospital at Warton, Lancs to sing to the survivors of the Freckleton tragedy on Friday September 1st. I suspect that from Warton he went to the nearby Burtonwood airbase to entertain the American troops before taking off from there for France. It was the BBC files which indicated that Bing was to fly to France on September 1st and as far as I know he did. I was however surprised to see the following cutting from the Newsweek periodical of September 18th 1944.

Bingle Blitz: *Bing Crosby, actor-crooner, known to German fans as "Der Bingle" broadcast to Germany from London, September 4th. Bing who doesn't understand German, memorised a short message phonetically voicing the hope that "our (American) rights and our freedoms soon will be observed again in your country." Then he sang 'Going My Way' and 'White Christmas' in German and 'The Last Time I Saw Paris' in phonetic French. Der Bingle's accent wasn't bad – at worst it would be pleasantly amusing to his audience.*

My own view is that the broadcast had been recorded the previous week but anyone who can add to the debate please let me know.

The Opening of the Stage Door Canteen.

Bing worked pretty hard in France and a month or two ago, I was interested to hear Paul Barnes read a letter on his radio show from a Victor Raitt of Water Newton, near Peterborough. Victor is a very keen Bing fan who frequently requests Bing items on radio but so far he has not joined the ICC. We must send him a magazine so that he knows what he is missing. His letter had the following war-time recollection.

"When we were in France in 1944 trying to push the enemy back into Germany, there was a time in the early Autumn when they were hitting back hard. No progress was being made on our part. We all had the miserable feeling that this was taking longer than it should and the men were down in the dumps. Well one day we had a call at Squadron office from the yanks just down the road. A Colonel said 'If you can get all the men together for a concert and place an open truck on the site as a platform, we'll send some entertainment along.' Well we knew that the yanks did put on some good shows for their men so we agreed. It was to be an afternoon entertainment starting at 3 pm. At 2.30, a jeep drove into the camp and up to our HQ tent. The chap in uniform jumped out of the jeep, he was the passenger next to the driver. He saw me and sort of saluted and greeted me with 'Hi' and I just dropped all the papers I was holding to grab his arm and shake his hand. It was the boss! As I recall it was Ike's driver in the jeep and the pianist had been sent over from England by Glenn Miller. I can't recall his name. One point which was made when the entertainment was offered to us was 'do you have a piano?' We did and it was the NAAFI instrument. Bing got on that stage, he had some sort of amplification with him and he started singing 'Blue Of The Night'. Troops appeared from all over the place and for an hour no-one asked if they were supposed to be on duty. It was September, yet when Bing asked for requests the clamour for 'White Christmas' topped everything with 'I'll Be Seeing You', 'Stardust' and 'You Are My Sunshine' also in great demand. Then Bing said he'd sing a song which all the American forces were asking him to sing – 'San Fernando Valley'. And so it went on for a whole hour but it all had to end as we had a war to win. As he jumped back into the jeep, Bing said 'Which way back? I don't fancy singing to the Krauts.' "

A lovely story with which to round off our memories of 1944.

Malcolm Macfarlane

Der Bingle has fun in a German uniform

(Editor: A C90 cassette containing amongst others extracts from Bing's appearances on Variety Bandbox, at the Queensberry All-Services Club, with the British Band of the AEF and the American Band of the AEF is available from:- George Harwood, 5 Glebe Road, Hemingford Grey, Huntingdon, Cambs. PE18 9DS. Price £3.99 inc. p. & p. to UK. members. The ICC will receive £1 for each cassette sold.

Lionel's Lines

Stardom Guaranteed! — Make Money in your spare time!

It should now be apparent, from my scribblings in this journal, that I have reached the age of introspection when one tends to linger over faded snapshots and yellowing press cuttings but be of good heart — you know that I am not going to end up discussing the Ayatollah Khomeini!

There was a time when "The Comics" were the video nasties of their day and considered by some, to be a root cause of juvenile delinquency. Fortunately, my parents did not subscribe to the view that the exploits of the Wolf of Kabul, Rockfist Rogan or Billy Bunter were likely to lead a boy onto that slippery, downward path that led to "knocking down Ginger", "bunking in" the cinema or "scrumping".

Together with being hopelessly addicted to these "topping yarns", I was morbidly fascinated by the advertisements which were invariably in microscopic print, occupying a scant half-inch of space. "BE TALLER in 14 days or your money back" or, "Immense business possibilities — A 1/- packet of Mucilac makes 6 bottles of first class hair cream with simplicity", didn't really fire my imagination but the promise of being a great musician, did!

By dint of some extraordinary self-denial, I managed to save up 5d, over as many weeks, towards "The 'Southern Isles' Ukulele Banjo — You can play this delightful instrument with very little practice with the aid of our FREE Lightning Tutor — 20/- VALUE for 11/9d". The dream scenario was already cooking, in which I would be sitting on the front doorstep casually strumming my own virtuosic accompaniment to a soulful rendering of "The Little Drummer Boy" when who should happen along but the "Great Impresario", who would stop and listen, captivated, nodding approvingly, before levelling his silver-toned cane at me and bellowing, "The boy's a natural! The World must hear him!"

Alas! As a ten year-old, my moral fibre had the consistency of a cobweb and I exchanged my chance of the Big Time for an extravagant splurge on Chocolate Nougat and Owls' Eyes. Profligate youth!

Nowadays, something other than a ukulele banjo is required and although you need have no more musical knowledge than might have been supplied by the "Lightning Tutor", your first requirement will be, at least, two chums, one to hold a guitar and the other to stand behind a keyboard.

It is preferable that you should find a new name. This obviates the nuisance of going "Ex-Directory" (Think of Mum) and may delay any possible reprisals. "Elastic Pickaxe", "Cold Tapioca" and "Diminished Responsibility" have not yet been used . . . Be my guest!

Dress is optional and should not be hampered by either propriety or good taste but consider the possibility of permanently wearing Ray Bans as a further aid to anonymity. Forget about music. This will be the least of your worries. However, you must have a "BEAT" and this should as closely resemble the sound of somebody banging on the outhouse door, as you can manage.

A demonstration video is essential. Please remember, this should be designed, not to highlight your performance but to divert attention from it and here, you will need outside help. Find a chap who knows his way around a bucket of dry ice and an electric fan. You will also need a director, capable of alternating between meaningless images, in monochrome or sepia and meaningess images, in technicolour, interspersed with outtakes from "Robocop". Contemplate, for extra camouflage, a "background trio" who should have been taught some rudimentary dance steps, preferably by whoever choreographs the cows in the Anchor butter commercial.

Your repertoire will consist, almost entirely, of songs that you have written yourself, thus cutting out the "middle man". Don't panic. All you have to do is think of a title which you then repeat, adnauseam. If you wish, this may be augmented with original ad-libs, such as, "C'mon!", "Yeah!" and "Awright!". BUT — Unintelligible Rules! — O.K.?

For your convenience, there is a choice of two vocal styles. You may favour the laryngitic whisper which should be barely audible at arms length or, you may find an affinity with the more robust version which, enhanced by tight underwear, has the ability to stretch vowel sounds beyond redemption and strangle syllables, at birth.

Your most arduous assignment will be to familiarise yourself with a new language. This is neither American nor English, Essex or Arkansas but you will discover that, in view of this patois, the above mentioned vowel sounds assume an entirely different value to those to which you have been accustomed. Here is a fragment from the Gershwins', by way of illustration:

"Ah'm bardin' mah taheem,
Cerz essa kahnda gar ah-yem . . . "

And that's it! Armed only with this tutorial and the

college motto — "Anything is a work of art, therefore anyone can be an artist(e)", you can go forth and stultify!

On the other hand, you may care to take note of the excellent appreciation by Will Friedwald which accompanies the MCA set 'Bing Crosby — His Legendary Years' — One of the most balanced views of Bing's rise to musical eminence that you are ever likely to read. For example, there will be few who will disagree with these quotes: "Crosby projected with a magic sense of intonation that afforded Tin Pan Alley the musical stature of the European classics and a jazz-influenced sense of time that made him the dominant voice of both the jazz age and the swing era" or, ". . . Crosby also elaborated on a further idea of Jolson's . . . specifically that a song's lyrics have to be treated as a sort of reality. You didn't have to treat the hit of the week as if it were Keats but the idea was to make the words ring true. 'I used to tell Sinatra, over and over', said Tommy Dorsey, 'there's only one singer you ought to listen to and his name is Crosby. All that matters to him is the words and that's the only thing that should matter to you, too.' Crosby achieved this largely, by making sure that each text he sang, no less than his screen roles, was congruous with the context of his character."

The essay goes on to examine, in some detail, almost all of the 99 recordings represented in the collection, including Cole Porter's, "I Love You" which raises our point for discussion.

Some of Bing's closest associates have remarked on his reluctance to voice these "three little words" and in this instance, reference is made to Rosemary Clooney's quote that, in effect, Johnny Burke was required to work his lyrics around this stipulation; the proof of being in the line from "Moonlight Becomes You" with its tiny proviso, ". . . *If* I say 'I love you' " and we can only conjecture as to whether Johnny would have preferred "when" instead of "if". (Mind you, any scholar will tell you that, "I *say*, I love you" does not mean the same as, "I love you"). In any event, he appeared to honour the "escape clause" in most of his work for Bing's screen personae. He wrote more than 30 love songs in nearly as many films, without ever overusing the word "love" and even in his very first assignment, we find that word again, ". . . but *if* I'm to say how madly I adore you, Let's call a heart a heart".

Some of the songs could be construed as, merely, lessons for the lovelorn. There were also those lyrics which extolled the lady's virtues without making too firm a commitment and in others, the protagonist would be "dreaming" — which doesn't count, of course. It maybe that the closest he got to breaching the "code of practice" was in his last "Road" movie, for Bing, with "To See You, Is To Love You".

Anyway, back to Mr. Friedwald who goes on to point out that, ". . . the crooner then breaks tradition and records a Porter perennial called, flat out, 'I Love You' ".

There is a story regarding this song which has been repeated, often enough, to assume some shreds of validity. Apparently, Porter was challenged to write a song with such a well-worn and obvious title (a little cheating may have occurred here, as his original title for the piece was, "It All Belongs To You And Me"). In February 1944, Mike Todd telegraphed this message to Porter, "Dear Cole, Bing Crosby is recording "I Love You", a week from today. I love you." By late April, the recording was, according to 'Billboard' the best-selling retail record in America. But a brief glance at the lyric reveals that it is not *the singer* who is using the contentious phrase:

" 'I love you', hums the April breeze,
'I love you', echo the hills,
'I love you', the golden dawn agrees . . . "

The fact is, that if there are 50 ways to leave your lover, there must be 5,000,000 ways to sing about getting another but amid this vast tonnage of "love" songs there seem to be relatively few which state unequivocally, "I love you". So, was Bing aided and abetted by the songwriters in his self-imposed embargo? It is more likely that the lyricists, themselves, were keen to avoid using the hackneyed phrase, fearful of being labelled, "commonplace" or "trite". However, there were many others who were unabashed by possible criticism (or couldn't think of a better way of putting it!). For example, Bing doesn't appear to have sung, "It's A Sin To Tell A Lie" or "There I've Said It Again". He did sing, "I Love You", on Philco Radio Time but even this carried the corollary, "For Sentimental Reasons".

To further test the theory, I have examined the year in which Bing recorded Cole Porter's, "I Love You". A year, when, if not at the height of his powers, he was, certainly, at the height of his popularity.

Of the 49 (different titles), he recorded in 1944, around 60% of them could be classified as "romantic ballads". How about "Amor" — that sounds promising — " . . . this word so sweet that I repeat, means 'I adore you' " — Well, it's not really the same, is it? or, "Like Someone In Love" — "limp as a glove and feeling like someone in love" — Definitely a non-qualifier; "Begin The Beguine" — " . . . and there we are, searing to love forever . . . " — Insufficient evidence; 'Let Me Call You Sweatheart" — "I'm in love with you . . . " — Almost — but not quite verbatim; "Beautiful Love" — ". . . will my dream come true . . . " — No chance! And it is not until the penultimate recording of the year that he abandons his principles with, yet another song entitled, "I Love You" (Ich Liebe Dich):

" . . . I love you then, I love you now,
I'll love you when the world grows old and dies,
I love you, dear and here your answer lies . . . "

Well, there's no getting out of that, is there? And here *our* answer lies. It is obvious that this was not a cast iron maxim for Bing, and there will be absolutely no need to rummage through the remaining fifty years of his recording career. We can be certain that the

phrase will crop up, without scrutinising every lyric that he ever sung, particularly, when four months later, he elected to re-record, "I Love You Truly".

This apparent "hang-up" of Bing's has been used by some latter-day biographers to argue a more sinister aspect of his character but I prefer a more logical explanation and return to Will Friedwald's notes, for the clearest and most thoughtful assessment: ". . . Which isn't to suggest that Crosby was afraid of emotion. He simply realised that by refusing to indulge in sentimental excesses, he could address the widest range of material without turning off any aspect of his audience".

I can only add, that without any egocentric vocal histrionics and no matter how banal, the poetry may have been, he brought a quality to a love song, that the public recognised and admired. Any doubters have the opportunity to compare with last December's new duet of "True Love" which was, to me, more horrifying than any monster from Jurassic Park.

P.S. It has just occurred to me that there could be readers who may consider my earlier remarks, regarding the current musical scene, uncharacteristically vitriolic, not to say, offensive. I can only say that I hope I have not stepped on anyone's icons. I *was* careful not to mention personalities but lists are available, on receipt of a postal order and the usual s.a.e.

Lionel Pairpoint

Gonzaga News

We mentioned in BING 104 that the possessions of the Bing Crosby Historical Society had been passed to Gonzaga University and that the BCHS had been dissolved. There have been a number of subsequent developments including much publicity in the Associated Press and an article in the Foley Centre Library newsletter. Several members have forwarded copies of the Associated Press article and we reproduce one from the Jersey Journal of September 30, 1993 with grateful thanks to the periodical concerned.

COMMUNITY/SENIOR MATHACCIUS

Crosby museum houses oddities of crooner's life

By Jim Klockow
Associated Press writer

SPOKANE, Wash. — Bing Crosby's monogrammed pajamas, socks and a ripe, musty T-shirt rest on beige metal shelves next to 15th-century volumes, bound in cracking leather, of the works of Bruno Psalter and first edition Dickens.

Hair pieces once worn by the crooner sit with a Stretch to Health fitness device endorsed by Crosby, part of a collection of 24,000 artifacts of Bing Crosby memorabilia now crowding the back room of Gonzaga University's special collections department.

The collection nearly doubled in size earlier this year when the Bing Crosby Historical Society in Tacoma closed because of declining membership and donated its materials to Gonzaga, where the singer once attended school.

Gonzaga has become the repository of the world's largest collection of Crosby memorabilia, the school says.

The 50 boxes scattered among the shelves are crammed with newspaper clippings, photographs and copies of Life Magazine. They appear next to a clock fashioned out of Bing's hit record, "I Haven't Time to Be a Millionaire," and boxes of records, tapes and the sheet music for "Swingin' on a Star."

In more than 50 years in show business, Crosby recorded about 1,600 songs and acted in more than 100 movies.

The recent acquisition alone included some 180 video tapes, 700 audio tapes, about 100 books, 800 78-rpm records and 200 LP albums, 30 photograph albums, hundreds of individual photos and two bronze replicas of the Crosby statue in front of the Crosby Student Center here.

Fast learner

Although she is enthusiastic about her mission, special collections librarian Stephanie Edwards doesn't know exactly what to make of all the stuff.

"I never knew a thing about Bing Crosby," said Edwards, who is fast becoming an expert on Crosby, who died in 1977 while golfing in Madrid, Spain.

She has spent hours escorting newspaper reporters, biographers and television crews through the stacks of Crosby artifacts. She's answered questions on live radio shows from Canada and to Burlington, Vt., and had her picture taken while holding Crosby's toupees.

Their discovery among the stacks last year generated a small storm of media interest. Movie producers forced Crosby to wear the hair pieces, which he referred to not-so-affectionately as "scalp doilies," Edwards said.

"I don't think Bing would be very happy that we have these on display," Edwards said. "He was kind of a shy person."

Attached to school

Born Harry Lillis Crosby in Tacoma in 1903, Crosby's family moved to Spokane three years later. He graduated from Gonzaga High School and began college at Gonzaga University, but left before graduation to pursue a singing career.

After leaving for Hollywood, Crosby kept strong ties with the university and the city of Spokane.

He insisted at one point on having Gonzaga produce the "Bing Crosby Edsel Show," which starred Frank Sinatra, Rosemary Clooney and Bob Hope.

That project netted the university nearly enough money to build the former Crosby Library, now called the Crosby Student Center. The remainder was raised through donations from Crosby and others.

Although there are thousands of Crosby artifacts in the collection, it is not comprehensive, Edwards contends.

Recent troubles

The Hollywood publicity image of Crosby has become tarnished in the last decade, with publication of biographies that alleged he was abusive to children of his first marriage.

Even those unflattering portraits, in books and magazines, are part of the collection, Edwards said.

Of late, the Crosby memory at Gonzaga has fallen on hard times.

The statue in front of the Crosby Center — with the late singer leaning forward over a set of golf clubs, the butt of what looks like a cigarette clenched in his teeth — has been the subject of pranks.

It's not really a cigarette, it is the truncated stem of a pipe. The first pipe was snatched from Crosby's grin only hours after the bronze statue was unveiled in 1981. A new pipe was installed, and stolen the next day. A few months later, another replacement disappeared.

The university has since outfitted the statue with a removable pipe that is put in only for special occasions.

This welcome publicity was followed by more sombre news. **Ken Twiss**, the driving force of the BCHS passed away on December 7th at the age of 82. There was a very nice tribute to him in the Tacoma News Tribune which we shall show shortly but first we welcome Crosby stalwart Bill Osborn to the pages of BING for the first time.

A Man and his Dream

I first met Ken Twiss in 1977 prior to Bing's death in that same year. Ken had already laid the groundwork for initiating the Bing Crosby Historical Society. Over dinner at our first meeting, he fully explained what he had already accomplished and the many things that he intended to do to get the project underway.

But first let's go back a few years, actually quite a few years. Like many of us, Ken became a Crosby record collector mainly because he loved the way Bing sang a song. In the early thirties Bing's delivery was totally new. It was exciting and Ken, like millions of others, bought almost every Crosby record as soon as it hit the shops. Ken's favourite Bing recording was "Dear Old Girl". He told me, "That's always been my favourite. Every time I hear it I start to cry." Others claim that he had mentioned the same thing about 'Just One Word Of Consolation.' Both songs were on the same Decca record.

For some reason in the latter part of the forties, Ken quit collecting and presented his 78 rpm Crosby collection to the Tacoma Public Library. This was not Ken's farewell to his deep interest in Bing Crosby. Actually this was really the beginning. Mr. Twiss had a dream. He wanted to be involved in something that would forever perpetuate the name of Bing Crosby. He envisioned something far greater than merely a fan club. He wanted a museum, a shrine, devoted to a man that he believed was the greatest entertainer of all time. Bing was born in Tacoma, Washington and therefore his society should naturally be located thought Ken in the city of Mr. Crosby's birth.

Never a day went by without Ken writing copious notes, doing much research, making numerous phone calls and writing many letters in the furtherance of this dream.

And now let's return to Ken's and my first meeting in 1977. Ken was a very soft spoken individual but his enthusiasm for getting the Bing Crosby Historical Society underway gave his voice a note of urgency and excitement. I have never met a man with more devotion and determination to fulfil a dream than Ken. He decided that most of the groundwork had been laid and now was the time to put the days, weeks, months, and years of preparation into action. Almost immediately a tragic event took place. Bing died on October 14th, 1977 while playing golf in Spain. This did not deter Ken. In fact it spurred him on to greater lengths to establish a means by which Bing's name would be forever remembered. The Bing Crosby Historical Society came into being and boasted members throughout the world. Some of the countries represented were Canada, Europe, Australia, South America and Japan etc.

Ken did have some help throughout the years in this gigantic undertaking but you could say, and truthfully, that the BCHS was a one man show. I have never seen a person so devoted to a project as Ken was to this undertaking. The society held a banquet and entertainment every year on the week-end closest to Bing's birthday of May 3rd. Members came from around the world to attend the event. The society had a museum that housed much Crosby memorabilia, films of all his movies that could be viewed on request etc.

Ken worked tirelessly many times seven days a week to fulfil his dream. However, Ken was in constant pain for the last years of his life. He suffered bone cancer and many days, due to increasing pain, it was almost impossible for him to even walk. He was generally cheerful and right to the end his devotion to the memory of Bing Crosby was as great as ever. Nobody did more than Ken Twiss to try and preserve the legacy of Bing Crosby.

Ken passed away in early December of 1993. He worked ceaselessly to accomplish his dream. No one was ever more devoted.

Bill Osborn
Seattle, Washington

(Editor: A fitting tribute by Bill. Michael Crampton often comments that we ought to start a 'museum' or repository for Bing artefacts, records, magazines etc. in this country because increasingly articles are becoming available that ought to be preserved safely somewhere. We lack a Ken Twiss in the UK but we may well return to this subject in future editions of BING. As the BCHS was being dissolved, Wig Wiggins wrote to each of the members inviting them to become members of the ICC and many have joined us. We welcome them and we hope that they will enjoy BING magazine. We now reproduce the tribute to Ken Twiss from the Tacoma News Tribute and our thanks to Bart Ripp for his fine words about Ken.)

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1993

Tacoma's Ken Twiss was crooner Crosby's biggest, best fan

By Bart Ripp
The News Tribune

He was Bing Crosby's biggest fan.

He preserved the legacy when it seemed everyone had forgotten Bing Crosby except for precious December moments when "White Christmas" was played around the world. He was a man who wanted the world to remember that Harry Lillis Crosby was born in 1904 on North J Street in Tacoma.

Ken Twiss

Ken Twiss – founder, president and eternal protector of the Bing Crosby Society – died in Tacoma last week after a long illness. He was 82.

And yet, Twiss was a child when it came to Bing Crosby. When the society had a snappy little museum in the Commerce Street level of the Pantages Theater, Twiss happily presided over a shrine of Bing pins, Bing neckties, Bing sheet music, Bing belt buckles, Bing wristwatches, a can of Bing beer brewed in Folkestone, England, a BING C license plate from New York state, a table made in 1876 by Bing's grandfather and unused wax cartons meant to hold ice cream marketed in the shimmering name of Bing Crosby.

Twiss discovered a lode of cartons in an antique shop on Broadway. The flavor, naturally, was vanilla. An unused carton cost $3, the only memorabilia for sale at the gallery.

Twiss was a Cleveland, Okla., native who moved to Tumwater in 1913, graduated from Puyallup High School in 1931 and became a Bing buff during the Depression.

Twiss accumulated more than 900 Bing 78s, which he donated to the Tacoma Public Library when he became a cook on the submarine USS Intimidator during World War II. While stationed at San Diego's Naval Training Center, Twiss regularly zipped up to Sunset and Vine in Hollywood and sat in the audience of Crosby's weekly radio show on CBS. A CBS producer named Bill Morrow introduced Bing to his biggest fan.

"He was a very easy person to know," Twiss said in 1989, "but I didn't want to bother him, so I stayed at a respectful distance."

A respectful distance was kept when Twiss regularly saw Crosby in the 1950s: Twiss was an executive chef with Pan American Airlines and lived in Burlingame, Calif. He used to see Bing and Kathryn Crosby walking in their hometown of Hillsborough, Calif.

"I would wave to him, and he would wave back," Twiss said, "but I didn't want to bother him."

Twiss moved to Tacoma and became chef at Johnny's Dock and Busch's Round Table. He listened to Bing Crosby records every day. He formed the Bing Crosby Historical Society in 1977, soon after Crosby died.

For 15 years, Twiss was a gang of one, remembering Crosby's sighing songs. "Just One Word of Consolation" was his favorite. It always made Twiss cry.

Twiss cried when he had to close the little gallery below the Pantages. Earlier this year, he signed papers to dissolve the society. It once had 350 members worldwide.

When Ken Twiss died, it was easy to imagine a snowy scene in heaven. Bing waves and asks Ken to come over on his side of the street. Bing Crosby sings "White Christmas" in a crooning voice only Ken can hear.

THE TACOMA CITY

I bumped into an old friend of mine the other day and during the course of conversation, I mentioned Bing as I am very prone to do. My friend said that he was reminded of the years when he was at sea as a young officer on board a ship belonging to the Reardon-Smith line out of Cardiff. It seems that all the ships of this line were named after towns and cities around the world and the officers were sitting around one evening over a drink when the conversation turned to the name of the ship which happened to be THE TACOMA CITY.

They were all idly wondering where this place could be when one man commented that he believed that Bing Crosby had been born there. This led on to a general discussion at the end of which it was decided to write to Bing and ask him if they could have his permission to name the bar in the officers' mess after him. Someone was designated to do this and various names associated with Bing were suggested for his approval before they all signed the letter and sent it off.

After a while they received a letter from Bing's secretary saying that unfortunately Bing was in Africa on safari at that time but she stated that she would certainly draw the letter to his attention upon his return. Some time passed and they had almost forgotten the affair when they received a very friendly letter from H.L. Crosby himself apologising for the delay and thanking them for thinking of him with regards to naming of the mess bar. He said that of the various names that had been suggested he thought that "The Old Groaner" might be the most appropriate and he ended by saying, "here's a few dollars, have a drink on me fellers." He had in fact enclosed some fifty dollars together with a large number of signed photographs all of which made Bing the most popular crooner on the TACOMA CITY for a long time to come.

I hope some readers of BING will be able to pinpoint the period when this took place from the fact that Bing was in Africa at the time as my old friend can't recall the year in quetion. He also adds that he doesn't know if the TACOMA CITY and its unique bar bearing the legend "The Old Groaner" still exists after all these years. I hope it does and that someone will be able to get a photograph of it one day.

Clive Menadue

Once in a While

Denny Dennis, who was sometimes called 'The British Bing Crosby' died in Kirkby-in-Furness, Cumbria on November 2 aged 80. We carried a major article on Denny's career in BING 100 and to recount briefly, Denny became famous with the Roy Fox band in the mid to late 1930s. After leaving Fox, Denny went to the Ambrose Orchestra and his record with them of 'South Of The Border' drew him to the attention of American bandleaders Paul Whiteman and Sammy Kaye. Because of wartime restrictions, Denny could not join Whiteman and after a spell as a solo singer, he enlisted in the RAF. After the war, his work again drew him to the attention of the Americans and he joined Tommy Dorsey in 1948 on a six-month contract. His contract was renewed for a further 6 months and he also made 5 recordings with Dorsey before returning to Britain. Sadly financial problems forced him into bankruptcy in 1952 and his career slowly declined with the onset of the Rock 'n Roll age. he later appeared in a touring show called Disc Doubles in which he impersonated Bing before drifting out of show business.

Don Ameche, whose stage and screen career stretched from the 1930s to the 1980s died of cancer in December at the age of 85. He was a major star featuring in films such as 'Alexander's Ragtime Band' (wih Alice Faye and Tyrone Power), "Swanee River' (with Jolson) and 'The Story of Alexander Graham Bell' (the inventor of the telephone). In later years he returned to prominence in the two Cocoon films. He never appeared in a film with Bing and I cannot see that he ever went on radio with Bing, so what's the connection? Only a minor one but it was quite memorable. On the 13th May 1967, he guested on the Hollywood Palace Show when Bing was the host. He and Bing plus Frances Langford took part in a marvellous medley of parodies of old film songs including 'You Brought Us The Phone' which was directed at Ameche's role as Alexander Graham Bell.

Perry Como's Irish Christmas

Perry Commo with (left to right) Joe Lynch, George O'Reilly, Ken Crossland and Malcolm Macfarlane.

Its a sad fact that those who can remember, first hand, the impact which Bing had on the music scene in the early 1930s, are few and far between. When one of them is still performing in the Crosby tradition, it's an even greater rarity. So whilst we remain a Crosby magazine, it seems more than appropriate to devote some space to a review of Perry Como's Irish Christmas, a concert recorded in Dublin on 21 January last, for televising later this year. Ken Crossland picks up the story.

It all began with a chance phone call from George O'Reilly in Dublin last December. George explained that Perry Como was due in Dublin in the New Year to record a Christmas TV special, and he (George) was

looking for an address to try and contact Perry. Happily I was able to help, but the thought quickly occurred "Why not go over?" Malcolm Macfarlane and Michael Crampton were keen also to make the trip and the three of us descended upon Dublin's fair city on the afternoon of 21 January.

The concert was due for that evening, but it seemed that no sooner had we dropped our bags than a combination of George's unrivalled contacts and irresistible charm had us on the inside of the Point Theatre watching the latter part of the afternoon rehearsal.

It got even better. Perry's guests included the Artane Boys Band, Ireland's most famous marching band, and its leader, Joe Lynch, offered to facilitate an introduction with Mr. C himself. In no time at all, we were shaking Como's hand and prompting him to tell us of his memories of Bing. Perry repeated the story of how Bing had disapproved of Perry flattering him on the air — "If it wasn't for him, I'd still be cutting hair", Perry had said in the middle of their duet on Perry's show in 1960. "He didn't like that" said Perry, "Don't say things like that", Bing had said sternly after the show.

We left Perry to his rehearsal, to return at 7.00 pm and join up with ICC members Michael O'Toole, Frank Brannigan, and Michael Kenefick and their respective wives, in a crowd of some 4,000, which also included Irish President, Mrs Mary Robinson.

We'd come not knowing quite what to expect from Mr Como. He is after all, 82 years old and you would be forgiven for saying that you'd come more because of who he is and what he's done, rather than today's performance.

The show turned out to be a somewhat strange animal — billed as a concert and promoted on a commercial basis, yet subject to the stop/start/do it again regime of a tele-recording.

Perry is not the nimblest on his feet any more and his entrance to the stage through the audience to a rousing Irish reception seemed high risk, but it worked. His first vocal, the self mocking **If I Could Read Your Mind** came across well, his voice showing both strength and tonal quality.

The show moved fluidly through its first half hour, mainly comprising carols and familiar Christmas songs. It was clear that Perry was being careful with his voice and didn't seem entirely confident as to how the notes would emerge — a trait that has been evident in all the great singers in their, dare I say, declining years. He rather struck me as being like an elderly man with an old dog at the end of a very long lead. Master and servant had been together a long time and there had been a time when the dog had run unfettered at his master's side, responding faithfully to even the lightest touch. Now the dog had become a little unpredictable, and though the old man knew they would both end up at the same place, he was no longer sure which route the dog would take. Such it was with Perry and his voice.

There were moments when Perry demonstrated that he still has some pipes — a rousing finale to **Bless This House** being one such example. For the rest, he was content to sing softly, to fade into the choir or just lead the audience in a singalong.

It was whilst he was doing just that that the show lost its way, and never really recovered. As Perry sat on his stool during **And I Love You So**, a man approached from the rear of the hall, walked its full length and climbed the stairs onto the stage. He meant no harm and wished only to shake his idol's hand, but if nothing else, it clearly ruined that part of the television production.

The show continued a while, with Perry's main guest, Twink, an Irish singer/comedienne whose exuberance and energy were a good foil for the more sedate Mr C. Around 9.00 pm, Perry announced a 15 minute intermission "to rest my aching limbs", and off we all went to the bar.

In due course, we resumed our seats, as did the orchestra and the choir. 9.30. No Perry. 9.40. No Perry. Where was he? Was he ill? Was he being detained by the Irish President? The audience became impatient and a slow handclap developed.

Finally, Twink appeared and explained that Perry had a cold and didn't feel his performance was doing justice to what the audience had a right to expect. What was she saying — that Perry was to quit on his stool?

The show moved on filming the non Perry elements, until around 10.10, the shuffling figure of Mr C reappeared. "I have a cold", he said "and my throat has gone, but I'll give it one more try and if it doesn't come out right, then you'll forgive me". He of course received a rousing cheer, although in truth, I suspect most people in the audience felt that he had performed quite creditably so far.

First task was to re-do the Como medley which had suffered the invasion, and there was more than a little tension around as Perry launched back into **And I Love You So**. Remarkably he sung it with a gusto which matched the original recording of 20 years ago. The famous Como voice soared across the full range of the song and as it did, the audience rose to its feet to cheer the old warrior. In a twenty minute spell, Perry despatched the medley, **Father Of Girls, Wind Beneath My Wings** and **Its Impossible** with barely a false note.

By now of course, any hopes of staying within the planned running order had evaporated into the Dublin night air. More and more the show came to resemble a pure TV recording as the director, Bob Wynn frantically tried to give himself at least a sporting chance of being able to put everything back to the right order.

Como himself remained involved throughout but was

clearly tiring — he'd been on stage since around midday — and his concentration lapsed. The trusty autopilot worked to deliver a faultless **Ave Maria**, but he lost interest in the linking dialogue, reverting to a more spontaneous and unscripted approach.

It was 11.30 pm before the orchestra finally got to **You Are Never Far Away From Me**, by which time many of the audience **were** far away, having left for last buses and trains. Perry received a rousing ovation and stayed on stage to sign programmes for a good 15 minutes before finally saying goodnight.

You'll gather that it was quite an experience. Whether it was a good or a bad one is down to the individual. The immediate reaction of the Irish media was mixed, with some criticism of poor value for money. In truth, the show had been more akin to a television recording, to which the audience is usually admitted free or at a nominal charge, than to a professional concert. Perry himself was concerned that he had not been up to par and went on radio after the show to apologise for "letting people down", but confirming that he had developed a very sore throat during the evening. He went on to offer to personally arrange refunds to any dissatisfied patrons.

A slightly sad ending perhaps, but wholly in keeping with the Como image. Perhaps he had overtaxed himself — certainly the rehearsal and the recording should to my mind, have been on different days — and perhaps he no longer has the concentration to sustain a major enterprise of this type. But the man is — and always will be — an entertainment legend, the last of the true Crosby disciples still performing. We felt we had perhaps witnessed one of the final acts of a long and illustrious career, and for that reason alone, it is my privilege to be able to say "I was there".

Ken Crossland

(Editor: A very accurate report by Ken on a memorable evening. Ken has, by the way, been presenting a series of radio programmes on Challenge FM in the West Midlands covering popular singers of the 20th century. Naturally Bing has been given due prominence.

After the Perry Como concert, Ken had to fly back to the UK but Michael Crampton and I were royally entertained by ICC members. George O'Reilly, Michael O'Toole and Frank Brannigan. What tremendous knowledge they possessed about Bing and George played an item I had never heard before. Lindsay Crosby singing 'Rock Around The Clock' with 'Dad' interjecting humourous comments and joining in the last line. The backing sounded like the Buddy Cole Hammond Organ. Bing sings 'Rock Around The Clock'! What next? Sincere thanks to George, Michael and Frank for their hospitality)

The Variety Appeal

After its many years of being difficult to get, the sudden appearance of "GOING HOLLYWOOD" has taken some gilt off my gingerbread plans for making a few Variety bob. Seen on the TNT cable channel on January 3rd, the fact of it being Bing's sole early MGM picture suggests that others from that same period will remain in the vaults.

Still available here, GOING HOLLYWOOD, DIXIE, WE'RE NOT DRESSING, PARIS HONEYMOON, BIRTH OF THE BLUES, HOLLYWOOD'S GREATEST ENTERTAINER, REMEMBERING BING, THE STARMAKER, JUST FOR YOU, PENNIES FROM HEAVEN, IF I HAD MY WAY, CHRISTMAS LIKE IT USED TO BE, MISSISSIPPI and, as a new entry, TWO FOR TONIGHT.

All clients seem agreeable to my claim that picture quality is excellent and that £8: per single film, £11.50 for a double keeps it within civilised limits. As of this mid-January point of time, the 1994 fund stands at a respectable £127.

My thanks to anyone involved in purchasing videos.

John Marshall

(Editor: Write to John at 39 Kings Rd., Teddington, Middlesex TW11 0QD to order videos.)

Bert Bishop's BING ON THE BOX

Quality rather than quantity has always been a good criterion to follow. Ergo, as frustrated Crosbyphiles we must apply that principle to the limited amount of Bing pictures which the various television companies present to the British viewing public. Although, taking his most popular movies it must be said, in all fairness, that they are screened with a regularity that compares quite favourably with other film stars. The main bone of contention, though, is that most of his 'Thirties flickers and a few of those produced later in his film career are continuously overlooked. Happily it is a pleasure to record in these columns the fact that two significant 1930's full length feature films starring the mellifluous Mr. C. have been beamed into our homes since our favourite magazine last hit the doormat; as the following listing will show.

HOLIDAY INN	BBC2 24th December
WHITE CHRISTMAS	BBC2 25th December
THE PRINCESS AND THE PIRATE	Channel 4 1st January
GOING HOLLYWOOD	TNT 3rd January
HIGH SOCIETY	BRAVO 5th January, 26th February
WHEN HARRY MET SALLY	BBC1 9th January
PENNIES FROM HEAVEN	Channel 4 22nd January

On account of its great rarity on British television quite the most enjoyable to watch, and capture on video, was GOING HOLLYWOOD which was the result of a Marion Davies night on the American CNN satellite company's TNT channel, previously noted in these pages for their thematic presentations screened each evening and through the wee small hours. It was an excellent print, with sound quality to match, marred only very slightly by the TNT logo in the top right hand corner. The one break for ads was easily dealt with to give seventy-eight minutes of sheer pleasure. Very often TNT show the original trailers to their films prior to the main feature. On this occasion it was a short, introductory clip more about Bing than Miss Davies. He is first heard in the film singing "Our Big Love Scene" on a radio that boarding school teacher Davies has in her room — an amusement forbidden by the Principle — as a result of which she packs her bags and leaves for Hollywood in pursuit of Bing, for whom she has formed an attachment because of his romantic singing style. During this first musical number Bing is seen briefly, wearing a tuxedo, but there was no mouth co-ordination with the song, and there was every indication that the clip might have been from a disconnected source. The plot of the film has all the simplistic banality of the 'boy meets girl' loses girl, gets girl' genre with the added wonderment of a pretty, young ex-school mistress landing the starring role in an all-dancing, all-singing stage show! The marvellous stuff of which most 1930s romantic musicals were made. Along the way Bing gets to croon five classic Freed-Brown romantic ballads, plus the film's title tune. The outstanding scene being Bing's cinematic interpretation of "Temptation" whilst in a state of advancing intoxication. A memorable acting and singing feat, enhanced by dramatic lighting and camera work that is the highlight of the film. This sequence was later to be featured in the 1976 picture THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT Part 2, whilst the title tune scene at Grand Central Station was shown in the first of these two MGM compilation movies. With a lively leading lady and good supporting cast, notably from Ned Sparks, as always, it is no wonder that this production was one of the several early to mid-'Thirties films that brought Bing so much deserved success in Hollywood. That film was the good news from TNT. The bad news, I'm afraid, is that they have the rights to only the MGM and Warner Bros. libraries, so an all Bing night on the 3rd May will not now happen as requested.

Marion Davies meets Bing in a 'Dream Sequence' from "Going Hollywood"

PENNIES FROM HEAVEN was last presented by Channel 4 in November 1991, not too long ago by repeat standards, but on this occasion we had the added benefit of a specially restored sound version making this screening an opportunity to preserve on video the best possible copy of a most enjoyable picture. Perhaps the Burke-Johnston tunes don't quite come up to the very high standard of the Freed-Brown score of the previously reviewed film, but there is no doubt that the title tune was a phenomenal hit for Bing. A song that is, for me, indelibly identified with a 1936 holiday in Jaywick and Uncle Peter's Talent Show on the beach! Two great 'Thirties Bing pictures within the space of nineteen days was an excellent start to the year. Let's hope this prodigious beginning can be maintained.

Of course, the two Christmas presentations by BBC 2 were welcome viewing and kept Bing's association with that festive season well to the forefront. They should be screened every year! Personal recollection, this time from mid-teen years, is again prompted by the mirthful denouement in the last reel of THE PRINCESS AND THE PIRATE when Bing as a seaman steps from the ranks to be embraced by the heroine, thus stealing from under the famous Hope nose that very same fair damsel his show business sparring partner has been maladroitly pursuing for the last nine reels! Yet another romantic victory over his old amigo that gave a humorous closing moments punchline to this 1944 piece of Bob Hope buffoonery.

Bing's connection with the 1989 romantic comedy WHEN HARRY MET SALLY is tenuous, and comes about only by the inclusion on the soundtrack of his 1962 commercial recording of "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas". Strictly one for the serious collector, but an entertaining film in its own right.

Apart from erstwhile cinema films the festive season was also noteworthy for other appearances by Bing Crosby. Notably, DREAMING OF A WHITE CHRISTMAS, a celebration of The Life And Music Of Irving Berlin. An ITV presentation in the South Bank series screened at 11.40 pm on Christmas Day. The fifty minute programme, narrated by Michael Freedland, also featured Berlin's daughter, with family reminiscences, Rosemary Clooney, Artie Shaw and others. But most importantly to us, Bing in a couple of song sequences from THE ED SULLIVAN SHOW screened in the USA on the 5th May 1968, being an 80th birthday tribute to the prolific little songwriter from Siberia. The South Bank Special opened with a clip from the closing stage production number of "White Christmas" from the film of the same name. Three more scenes from the film were to follow; Bing singing to the troops, the "Sisters" song and a further excerpt from the finale. In tracing Berlin's earliest beginnings much interesting turn-of-the-century film and photographs were used, including a shot of the Pelham Café where Berlin worked as a singing waiter and where a sign stated Ask Izzy To Sing "Marie From Sunny Italy"; 'Izzy' because Israel Baline had yet to change his name. This was Berlin's first credited lyric to a tune composed by the bar pianist. It was also the first of two songs Bing was shown singing on the Ed Sullivan Show, the other being another early composition entitled "The International Rag". (For the complete listing please refer to BING No. 104 p.29).

The next Bing appearance was a scene from the film REACHING FOR THE MOON, — ". . . introducing the young Bing Crosby." — where he bounces in to the ship's saloon singing "When The Folks High Up Do The Mean Low Down", the highlight of an otherwise fairly tedious movie. Finally, for the Crosby content, Bing was shown interviewing Irving on his latest production, CALL ME MADAM, and asked for "inside track" info on the tunes before "any Johnny-come-latelys" got a hold of them. As a little research will show Bing was later to record "The Best Thing For You" and "Marrying For Love" from the score. It also reveals that he recorded another song composed for the show but dropped before it opened on Broadway. Originally called "Free", Berlin completely re-wrote the lyric whereupon it was introduced in the film WHITE CHRISTMAS as "Snow". All in all this biographic documentary was an absorbing look at the life of a man described by songwriter Saul Chaplin as ". . . probably the best popular American song writer who ever lived." and by Jerome Kern in the words "Irving Berlin has no place in American music, he IS American music." How fortuitous for all concerned that Bing was to be indelibly associated with his most popular composition.

It would take more than a pack of wild horses, as the song goes, to drag me in front of the TV to watch TOP OF THE POPS — normally. However, I'm sure that pretty near most of us were watching when, in 1975, Bing appeared on the programme to sing his hit song "That's What Life Is All About". An event that I don't even rate as being as high as a dubious honour. Clearly, it gave the song some exposure; but to whom one might ask? Surely 'Parkinson' and Vera Lynn's TV show had greater potential with regard to sales? All that is water under the bridge and is referred to here only on account of yet another sighting of Bing on British television. In a BBC1 special on the 4th January thirty years of this programme were celebrated by the Beeb in 'Smashie and Nicey's Top Of The Pops Party'. (S. and N. appear to be pseudonyms of Harry Enfield and Paul Whitehouse, if that means anything to you.) Mr. Crosby was given a full fifty-eight seconds of time whilst the running caption read: 'Honestly, Sir Bing was on Top Of The Pops, and this was a hit in 1975. Even the Rt. Hon. Edward Heath sneaked in to watch whilst Producer Robin Nash was directing in the gallery.' If the time devoted to Bing sounds brief it was around twice as long as that allotted to Bill Haley, Michael Jackson, Rod Stewart et al. Perhaps, after all these years, the Beeb appreciate the honour he was doing THEM!

Two further mentions of television before switching off the small screen. Firstly, an ITV 'Stars In Their Eyes'

New Year's Day Special had ICC member Joe Baron giving his best impression of Der Bingle singing "White Christmas", whilst another contestant warbled "Blue Christmas" á la Elvis in a grand, joint finale. The second item gets a mention only on account of illustrating what passes for humour these days. Anarchic Alexei Sayle, in a new BBC2 'show' on the 27th January had a 'raised from the dead' Bing and Judy Garland in macabre performances of "White Christmas" and "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas". This came to my attention when Hazel Kelly, wife of ICC member Frank, came into Frank's Bing room where he, Wally Oldfield and I were enjoying a convivial get-together, to tell us she'd just witnessed this bizarre example of British television at its worst. Here, at least, things are back on good, wholesome ground with our 'what's been on the wireless' department!

Even as I type Bing is singing "Thanks To You" on John Gunn's ever popular '78 Vintage' on BBC Essex — Saturdays at 1 pm immediately after the news headlines. Crosby Corner being a permanent fixture in that cornucopia of nostalgic diversity. An annual guest on 'John Gunn's '78 Vintage' is John Hayes, who took over a whole programme last autumn whilst the resident host was on holiday and took the opportunity to present an all Bing Special, as reported in the last edition of BING. On New Year's Day the two were together on the programme and John Hayes expressed his thanks to his host for changing his musical taste, saying he used to think Bing was just another crooner but had come to realise there was a great deal more to him than that! Our thanks to John Gunn not only for his regular Crosby Corner, playing our requests and making dedications, but also for his convert to the Crosby cause effected over the last year or so.

BBC Essex along with Cambs., Northants., Norfolk, Suffolk and BBC Three Counties (which covers Herts., Beds. Bucks.) is also the weekday place to be on the dial, 10 pm till midnight, in order to catch Paul Barnes with two hours of 'music for grown ups'. Paul is another convert to the Crosby cause and, as I understand, has now joined the I.C.C. His is a 'phone in programme where listeners are invited to air their views on the music and artistes that he features on record. Inevitably this expands to anecdotes and even poems, and in the last few months a Crosby v. Sinatra war has been raging (maybe 'raging' is a little too strong) on the air. All fairly good naturedly but certainly enthusiastically! Paul is being cultivated by Stan White, who keeps him well informed and is educating him in Crobyana. "No. But I know a man who does!" says Paul when he doesn't know the answer to various questions on Bing posed by his listeners. Also, Ernest Sutkowski generously supplies him with CDs, so he is becoming very favourably inclined to 'The Boss' as he likes to refer to Bing — the boy from Hoboken being 'The Guv'ner'. Around Christmas time I.C.C. member June Manton from Northants. had a four minute call to Paul Barnes and told him of her trip to the U.S.A. visiting Paramount Studios, seeing Bing's resting place and meeting Bob Hope, etc. and in doing so got in a good plug for the Circle. Another call which fascinated me was from an elderly chap named Freddy who said he remembered a song from a Bing film of around 1934, hadn't heard it since, didn't think it had a title, and then proceeded to sing note-for-note, whistle-for-whistle all of Bing's recording of "I'm Hummin', I'm Whistlin', I'm Singin' "! The affection for Bing that comes across on the programme is very heartwarming. At present Paul's Bing era is the 'Forties and 'Fifties, (though like EVERY programme presenter he has given "Dinah" a whirl) so he'll have to be introduced to the earlier Crosby years to complete his education on 'The Boss'!

Harking back to the 16th anniversary of Bing's demise there were two programmes that devoted most of their air-time to the occasion. Peter Moreton of BBC Northampton in his IT OUGHT TO BE BAND series did a special entitled BIG BAND CROSBY on the 16th October 1993 managing to feature fourteen tracks from "Sweet Georgia Brown" through to "Tie A Yellow Ribbon"; along the way imparting a few accurate, if condensed, facts regarding Bing's career. Doctor Swing, as Moreton styles himself, is also an enthusiastic Crosbyphile, but his excitable, vocal histrionics I find hard to listen to, which is unfortunate because his programmes are otherwise enjoyable and informative. Meanwhile, on Trevor Littlechild's 'TIME WAS' series, on BBC Radio Cambridgeshire, another biographical remembrance was taking place. Trevor is also a radio presenter who is very knowledgeable, or at least has access to same, to a degree that whets the appetite for more. During his programme he noted the death of Helen O'Connell last year by playing Bing's and her recording of "Surrey With A Fringe On Top" from the G.E.C. programme of 7th February 1954. A great deal of air-shots are being played on the 'easy listening' programmes these days. With so much of this material now available on compact disc it is very tempting for the record spinners to depart from the usual commercial recordings and sally forth into this whole new world of Crosbyana that is opening up for them. Although a surfeit of such songs in the genre of "Blacksmith Blues", "Glow Worm" and "Feet Up, Pat Him On the Po Po" became a little indigestible and surely do nothing at all to promote the unique quality of Bing's voice to the public at large.

It goes without saying that both Benny Green and Alan Dell have been playing their share of Crosbyana; Benny even digging out one of member Dick Nettleton's 'Crosby In Lyrics' tracks with "Eeeny Meeny Miney Mo" ("Even Mr. Crosby Bings it") featuring vocalists Johnny Mercer and Ginger Rogers.

Of the relatively recently released CDs 'HEY! LOOK US OVER', 'THE GREAT YEARS', 'ONLY FOREVER' and 'A MUSICAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY' are continuing to attract the greatest attention and have been very favourably received by all the principle presenters. Taken all round there are very few

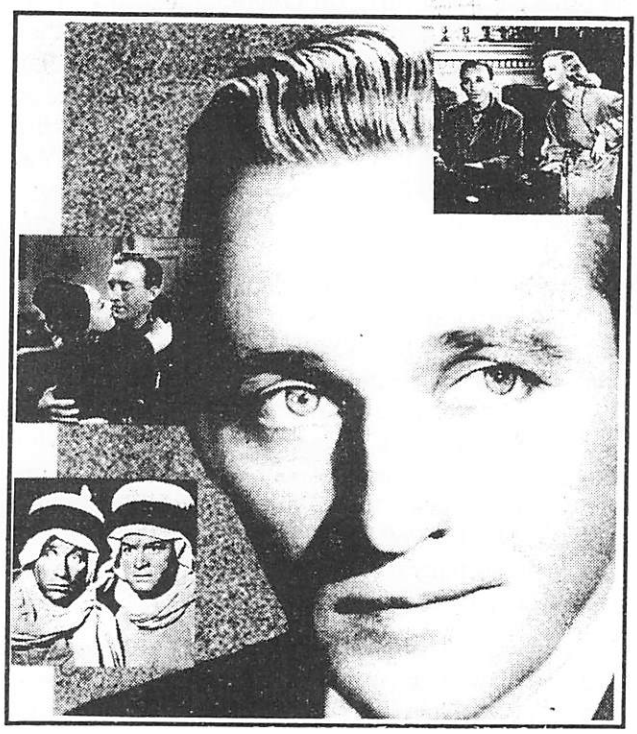
examples of Bing's vast recorded repertoire that aren't aired between one issue of this magazine and the next — and happily for all concerned that healthy trend seems to be expanding and broadening to encompass the infinite variety of Bing's unique career: and with very encouraging feedback!

One final comment that deserves a place in this magazine relates to Michael Holliday and a programme presented by Dennis Lotis commemorating the 30th anniversary of the death of 'The British Bing Crosby' as he was therein described. Indeed the second track played was Bing's "Sweet Georgia Brown", a recording that Holliday heard as a young boy and with which, along with other Crosby 78s that followed, he was to become totally entranced. The programme was an affectionate and informative presentation of the, finally, tragic career of a very talented singer whose regard for Bing is well known to us all, Regrettably, in popular music, the gap that these dear departed leave seems destined never to be filled.

Bert Bishop

Bing Crosby: His Legendary Years

There has been a tremendous reaction to the 4 CD Box set and to the video jointly bearing this title. MCA have worked hard at getting publicity for their issues and we are delighted to see that the Box Set was nominated for a Grammy for the best historical album. Other nominations were for (1) Noel Coward: His Master's Voice, (2) The Complete Billie Holiday On Verve 1945-59, (3) Frank Sinatra, The Columbia Years 1943-52 and (4) The Monterey International Pop Festival.



Copies of many reviews of the set have been sent to me and all of these have been favourable. Space limits us to reproducing just one of these opposite with greatful acknowledgements to the Washington Post. We also reproduce the front cover of Goldmine magazine and you may like to know that Goldmine is an A3 size issue aimed at 'the collector's record and compact disc marketplace'. The Christmas Eve edition not only featured Bing in colour on the cover but also no less than a 25 page article and discography inside! Back copies may be available and write to Goldmine, 700 E. State St., Iola, WI 54990, USA to enquire (or ring 715-445-2214). The magazine costs US $2.50. Gary Giddins (who is preparing a massive tome on Bing) wrote a fascinating article for the November 23rd edition of Village Voice (the New York paper) looking at the recent box sets from Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald and of course Crosby. Needless to say, our man gets a good review.

Crooners Crosby, Como And Mathis, Smooth as Silk

By Mike Joyce
Special to The Washington Post

Long before the term "crossover artist" was coined, Bing Crosby casually and crooningly personified it. He may not have consciously charted all the territory he covers on the new box set "Bing Crosby: His Legendary Years 1931-1957" (MCA), drawn from his years with the Brunswick and Decca labels, but it's impossible to imagine another singer being so comfortable or convincing in such varied jazz, pop, cowboy, Irish, Hawaiian, religious, patriotic and novelty settings. Or so universally popular.

Jack Kapp, who worked for Brunswick and later headed up Decca, generally gets credit for making sure Crosby's repertoire defied categorization, a strategy that sometimes emphasized diversity at the expense of quality. That perhaps explains why Crosby infrequently recorded songs by Cole Porter, though as annotator Will Friedwald points out, Porter's

uncharacteristic novelty "Don't Fence Me In" became a huge Crosby hit.

Yet if the songs didn't always prove worthy of the singer, Crosby generally made the most of them, relying in part on his affinity for jazz phrasing and improvisation—evident in his patented vocal trills and the playful spontaneity that often characterized his duets with Louis Armstrong, Louis Jordan, Peggy Lee, Jimmy Durante and others—and in part on his craft as storyteller and balladeer. To hear him sing the more substantial songs on this collection, such as "Dancing in the Dark," "It's Been a Long, Long Time," "Autumn Leaves," "But Beautiful" or "What's New," is to understand why Tommy Dorsey once told Frank Sinatra, "There's only one singer you ought to listen to, and his name is Crosby. He listens to the words, and that's the only thing that ought to matter to you too."

All told, the four-CD box gathers together 100 tracks, beginning with some engaging small band sessions on Brunswick (including Crosby's trademark scat reading of "Just One More Chance") and encompassing classic versions of "Stardust," "White Christmas," "Easter Parade," "I'll Be Seeing You," "I'll Be Home for Christmas" and two versions of his theme song, "Where the Blue of the Night (Meets the Gold of the Day"). There's also a rather unlikely Crosby alliance with Woody Herman and His Woodchoppers on "Deep in the Heart of Texas," plus irrepressible and irresistible pairings of Crosby and Armstrong on "Gone Fishin' " and Crosby and Lee on "Watermelon Weather."

A previously unissued but often bootlegged version of "Wrap Your Trouble in Dreams" also ranks as a classic of sorts; after losing his place, though not his composure, the unflappable crooner coolly improvises a verse in unprintable fashion.

Not the least of the collection's pleasures is Friedwald's astute and amusing notes, which deftly integrate such delightful anecdotes as Irving Beriin's recollection of bringing "White Christmas" to Crosby: "Of course, he's not the one to throw his arms about and get excited," Berlin recalled, "he just took his pipe out of his mouth and said, 'I don't think you have to worry about this one.' " *(To hear a free Sound Bite from this album, call 202-334-9000 and press 8151.)*

Lionel Pairpoint has already made many favourable comments about the Bing box set and I must say that I like it enormously too. The 68 page booklet is superb and the article by Will Friedwald is indeed excellent. A very interesting mixture of songs has been put together incorporating alternate tracks and unissued takes whilst retaining the well known hits to make the package commercial. The only disappointment is the quality of a few of the earlier tracks where MCA did not possess the masters and had to use versions from other sources. We could have helped them as undoubtedly we have members who could have provided better quality tracks in some cases. Overall however, the set is very good indeed and we welcome it enthusiastically. Sincere thanks to Andy McKaie and Steven Lasker for their hard work. The album has not yet been issued in the UK but contact Derek Parkes to order your copy. Price in the USA is $64 for the CD version and $39 for the cassette issue.

Turning to the video, this had its World Premiere on the Disney Channel on November 21st last prior to being put on sale. Again it has been extensively advertised in the USA but as we go to press it is still not available in the UK. We had understood that it would be in the shops before last Christmas and our apologies to those members who scoured numerous video stores for it. John J. O'Connor of the New York Times wrote a detailed review of the video and also of another video "America's Crooner" which was shown in December and we reproduce this below with acknowledgements to Mr. O'Connor and the New York Times. We look forward to seeing the video in the UK soon and our grateful thanks to Bryan Johnson for putting it together. Bryan hopes to get another video "The Magic Of Bing Crosby — Part Two" out shortly which will contain a lot of Bing's TV appearances.

Malcolm Macfarlane

THE NEW YORK TIMES **THE LIVING ARTS**

DECEMBER 8, 1993

Reviews/**Television**

Crosby's 2 Lives, Public and Private

By JOHN J. O'CONNOR

Long before he died at 74 on a golf course in Spain in 1977, Bing Crosby had become a cultural artifact, his career whittled down to lifeless Christmas specials on television. Bing was in effect dethroned when Elvis became king. For a new generation, the veteran performer was hopelessly old-fashioned. Now, helped in large measure by digitally remastered recordings of his early work, Crosby is riding a richly deserved revival.

Two television biographies help explain why. Currently on the Disney Channel, getting its next play tomorrow night, is "Bing! His Legendary Years," narrated with unabashed hero worship by the comedian Dennis Miller, his usual scattershot irony discarded for the occasion. And on Tuesday the Arts & Entertainment Network's "Biography" series presents "Bing Crosby: America's Crooner," a documentary that peeks beneath the image at some troubling aspects of the performer's private life.

The Disney essay, an MCA Music Video, accentuates only the positive. Some of Mr. Miller's accolades: "Hip? I think he embodied the word. The Mick Jagger of 1926. Mr. Cool. The guy did it all." And indeed, in the history of show business, there are few careers to rival Crosby's.

His recordings hit the sales charts 340 times. Forty of them were No. 1 hits. Mr. Miller says that in all, a billion of his records were sold worldwide. He was a radio superstar for decades. The "Kraft Music Hall" alone accounted for 10 years. He was a movie star, placing in the box-office Top 10 for 20 years and winning an Academy Award for "Going My Way." Little wonder that Life magazine's 1990 list of the 100 most influential people of the 20th century listed only two pop performers: Crosby and Presley.

•

And Crosby managed to make it all seem incredibly easy. He was always, as Mr. Miller says, "the Everyman lover with average-Joe looks and a fabulous voice." Exuding an almost cocky self-confidence, he clearly enjoyed making fun of his image as a sex symbol and great lover. Again Mr. Miller: "He had the magical ability to make it seem as if he wasn't acting at all." He didn't act; he reacted. Crosby's movie career began in Mack Sennett comedy one-reelers based on songs he had recorded. His sense of humor would serve him well, not least in the classic "Road" movies with Bob Hope.

His early singing style, partial to fast-paced syncopation, was heavily jazz influenced, and Crosby, though hardly a social activist, would be instrumental in getting movie work for great black jazz musicians like Louis Armstrong. But the expanding Crosby repertory was broad, encompassing everything from romantic ballads to country to novelty ditties. Mr. Miller describes the typical Crosby experience: "When he sang, oh baby, he felt it. And when he felt it, so did we."

"His Legendary Years" has some curious gaps. Crosby's famous theme song, "The Blue of the Night" is neither heard nor even mentioned. And while carefully eliminating or rigorously playing down the negative, the script gets entangled in questionable analyses. Commenting on a decline in Crosby's popularity, for instance, Mr. Miller speaks of "a new generation rejecting the family values Bing represented." If that is so, the new generation should be congratulated. Crosby's family values seem to have been wretched. At least, that's what is indicated in A&E's "America's Crooner."

•

Including interviews with two Crosby biographers, Gary Giddins and Robert Slatzer, "America's Crooner" touches on all the highlights of the performer's extraordinary career, on the surface an enviable exercise in easygoing affability. But it also re-

→

veals the darker side of that career. Early on, Crosby had a drinking problem. He was, as one colleague remembers, a "fall-down drunk," given to brawls. Crosby would eventually control his drinking, but his wife, Dixie Lee, would not control hers. She would simply be kept out of the public eye until her death of cancer in 1952, supposedly raising their four sons in an ideal family setting.

Gary Crosby, the oldest son, recalls how in private life "the kids were scared all our lives." The genial performer, it seems, was a fierce disciplinarian at home, when he managed to spend any time there. Gary says he and his brothers were beaten with straps and chains, sometimes to the point of blood being drawn. Meanwhile, the Crosby family was being portrayed in fan magazines as the very embodiment of the American dream.

None of which detracts from the splendid accomplishments of Crosby the entertainer, the superstar, the voice of America in World War II. Even son Gary, dismissing the word "love" as "a little strong" in describing his feelings for his father, has to admit that "he made a lot of people happy and he did good." And what is called Crosby's natural aptitude for singing is very much alive on the old recordings. Proof? Get the three-CD collection "Bing Crosby: The Crooner. The Columbia Years 1928-1934." Crosby the singer would never be better.

Memories of Bing Crosby

"An Evening of Nostalgia and Fun" was scheduled to take place on April 8th. in Royston, Herts. Under the banner, "Memories of Bing Crosby" a salute to Bing headed by Roy Chappell (former Sid Phillips Band vocalist) was planned. Harry Strutters Hot Rhythm Orchestra provided the music and Trevor Littlechild of BBC Radio Cambridgeshire was the compere. The event was in memory of the late Terry Warr, a musician from the Sid Phillips Band. Terry Dash was the organiser and he has been in contact with us to advise that he hopes to put on a similar show at the Kenneth More Theatre, Ilford, Essex on June 25th.

BING'S LOST 78'S

'Wig' Wiggins, our USA representative takes up his pen in pursuit of missing 78's

The first half of Bing's recording career occurred during "the 78 era," when commercial records were issued in either the 10-inch, or occasionally the 12-inch, 78 rpm shellac format. By 1950, "the microgroove era" had arrived, and the majority of Bing's single records subsequently were released in both the 78 rpm and 45 rpm formats, until 78's finally disappeared completely during the mid-1950's.

Over the last forty years, the great majority of Bing's commercial recordings originally released only as 78 rpm records have been reissued either as 45 rpm singles or on 45 rpm extended play albums, or else in the 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ rpm long play (LP) vinyl format. The major recording companies which owned the original copyrights and possessed the masters of Bing's pre-1950 records (primarily RCA Victor, Columbia, Brunswick, and Decca in the USA) eventually managed to reissue many, but certainly not all, of the 78's from their vaults on microgroove.

To supplement these commercial reissues, a dedicated and stalwart band of Crosby devotees has done yeoman service over the years for other collectors by transferring most of Bing's other pre-1950 recordings to microgroove on the various limited editions and private label LP albums produced for members of the various Crosby clubs around the world.

Prominent among these stalwarts have been (1) **in England**: John McNicholas (producer of the magnificent "Chronological Bing Crosby" series on Jonzo records), John Joyce (producer of the ongoing "Through the Years" series on Limited Edition Club records), and the late Bob Jones (producer of the "Moments to Remember" series of private label albums); (2) **in the USA**: Stan Hester (producer of Broadway records); and (3) **in Australia**: Gordon Wall (producer of the indispensable "Crosbyana" series of private label albums from Down Under).

Because of the invaluable work of these private label LP producers, along with the participation of many other Bing collectors who have generously provided copies of rare 78's from their personal collections for conversion to microgroove, today only a few of Bing's recordings remain locked into the obsolete 78 rpm format.

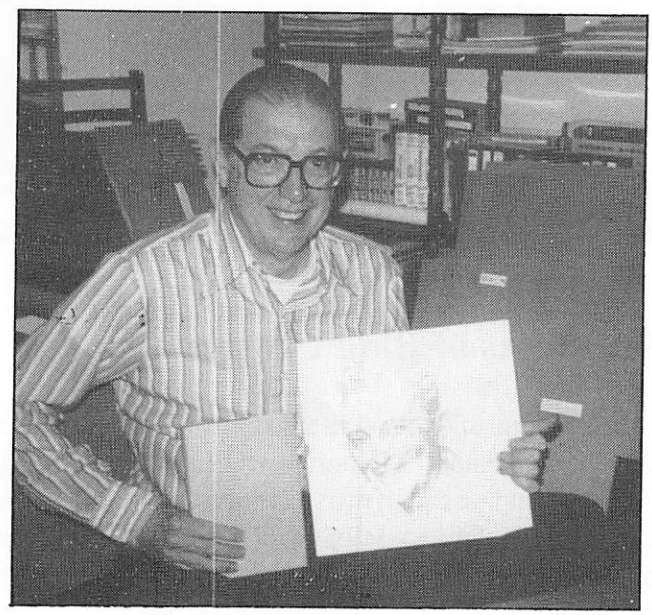
Nevertheless, there are still at least 15 of Bing's commercial recordings which remain "lost" to modern collectors, who either cannot find increasingly rare copies of these 78 rpm records, or else do not possess a still-functioning turntable on which 78's can be played.

As encouragement to those Crosby supporters who are still active private label LP producers, and/or now working in the compact disc formula, I am publishing herewith my personal list of Bing's remaining 78 rpm recordings which have yet to be reissued on either long play or compact disc albums. I hope that the industrious elves who assist such ICC members as John Joyce and Derek Parkes in their continuing efforts to preserve Bing's legacy for other collectors will be able to help them resurrect these remaining "lost" 78's from their undeserved status as an endangered species of the 1990's.

Fellow ICC members will note that these 78's are all from American Decca masters recorded between November 1935 and February 1947. Some of these songs were subsequently re-recorded by Bing for Decca, but most were not. And although the quality of a few of these recordings was not of the best, they all were considered worthy of commercial release by Decca when they were first produced.

In any event, it would be a real bonus for Bing collectors someday to be able to add these last 15 recordings to their collections in either the LP or CD format.

By the way, thus far the compact disc era has rescued only two of Bing's previously-missing 78's; **Connecticut**, his duet with Judy Garland that was recorded March 9, 1945 (L 3750). Take A of this recording is now available on Music Club CD-089 (UK) and Take B is on MCA CD-10504 (USA). **Silent Night** recorded November 13, 1935: Take A is now available on the new MCA 4-CD set, "Bing. His Legendary Years 1931-1957".



Wig Wiggins continues his search

BING CROSBY'S 78 RPM RECORDS NOT YET REISSUED ON LPS OR CDS

1. ADESTE FIDELES (DLA 256-A & DLA 256-B) — Recorded November 12, 1935
2. WHEN THE ORGAN PLAYED "O PROMISE ME" (DLA 1052-A) — Recorded November 12, 1937.
3. SILENT NIGHT (L 3026-A) — Recorded June 8, 1942. (LP Reissues have been L 4375-A, recorded March 19, 1947).
4. TOO-RA-LOO-RA-LOO-RAL (L 3456-A) — Recorded July 7, 1944 (LP Reissues have been L 3895-A, recorded July 17. 1945.)
5. A FRIEND OF YOURS (L 3463-A) — Recorded July 19, 1944.
6. STRANGE MUSIC (L 3692-A) — Recorded December 11, 1944.
7. MORE AND MORE (L 3694-A & L 3694-B) — Recorded December 11, 1944.
8. ALL OF MY LIFE (L 3762-A) — Recorded January 21, 1945.
9. IF I LOVED YOU (L 3801-A) — Recorded April 18, 1945 (LP Reissues have been L 4735-A, recorded December 24, 1947).
10. THAT LITTLE DREAM GOT NOWHERE (L 3918-A) — Recorded August 17, 1945.
11. YOU MAY NOT LOVE ME (W 73298-A) — Recorded January 22 1946 (Take B was reissued on a Crosbyana LP).
12. OH, BUT I DO (L 4170-A) — Recorded May 15, 1946.
13. GOTTA GET ME SOMEBODY TO LOVE (L 4184-A) — Recorded May 15, 1946 (Take C was reissued on a Crosbyana LP).
14. GOTTA GET ME SOMEBODY TO LOVE (L 4355-A) — Recorded February 13, 1947.
15. WHAT AM I GONNA DO ABOUT YOU (L 4356-A) — Recorded February 13, 1947.

(Additions and corrections to this list would be appreciated).

F.B.Wiggins

Derek Parkes' Crosby Collectors Club

Not so very long ago people were complaining about the lack of new Bing CDs and, in order to make this a reasonably interesting article , any disc that contained a Bing track was listed. Today Bing CDs are appearing all over the world and the task of finding news of (never mind the discs) is almost impossible. Worldwide, more than 250 CDs have been released and this number does not include the hundreds of CDs in which Bing only makes a 'guest' appearance. The policy now is to attempt to list all major releases (Bing being the main artist) plus other CDs, which mainly feature other artists, but which contain something of real interest to Crosby collectors. Remember that this cannot be done without the help of collectors everywhere. If there is anything at all that you feel has been overlooked — or you find something of special interest (especially if the source is unusual) please write to:

D.C. Parkes, 66 Firs Road, Firsdown, Salisbury, Wilts SP5 1SW.

With the arrival of several parcels from Australia and the States, the Club has been extremely busy. Unfortunately, this coincided with one or two personal difficulties, which happily have now cleared. Nevertheless, with the huge increase in Club membership the work involved is considerable and so very reluctantly I must now advise you that no new members can be accepted. The time has come — and the work has started — to completely overhaul the running of the Club. Eventually, and this is said with great confidence, the reorganisation will result in much time saving and far greater efficiency. The time will come when the Club will be reopened to anyone wishing to join. Unfortunately, in the confusion of reorganising 'Derek's Den', a listing of new members AND THEIR ADDRESSES has gone astray. Any new member who has not received 'Newsheet No 12' should drop a line to the above address. Apologies are given for the inconvenience.

The December BING was released just a little too early to include the Christmas CDs. Now is the time to start singing "White Christmas' as you read on.

NEW RELEASES, REISSUES OR PREVIOUS OMISSIONS

NB: Where a price is quoted, it is a guide to the normal retail price in the country of origin (or as stated). Club prices may be higher (imports) but are more likely to be much lower than those shown. Although mainly shown as being CDs, cassettes and occasionally LPs may be available.

CHRISTMAS CRACKERS

CD **MUSIC CLUB MCCDX002 CHRISTMAS WITH BING CROSBY** **UK £6**

White Christmas (1947)
Silent Night (1947)
It's Beginning To Look Like Christmas
Little Jack Frost Get Lost (w. Peggy Lee)
Medley (Good King Wenceslas, We Three Kings of Orient Are, Angels We Have Heard On High)
Sleigh Ride
Christmas Is A-Comin'
Medley (Deck The Halls, Away In a Manger, I Saw Three Ships)
I Heard The Bells On Christmas Day
I'll Be Home For Christmas
The Twelve Days Of Christmas (with The Andrews Sisters)
Santa Claus Is Coming To Town (with The Andrews Sisters)
God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen
The Christmas Song
Christmas In Killarney

Playing Time: 45 minutes
Tracks: 16

CD **MCA (SP) MCAD 22079 THAT CHRISTMAS FEELING** **USA £5**

That Christmas Feeling
Christmas Is A-Comin'
The Christmas Song
Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer
Is Christmas Only a Tree?
You're All I Want For Christmas
Here Comes Santa Claus (with The Andrews Sisters)
Medley (Deck The Halls, Away In a Manger, I Saw Three Ships)
The First Noel
The Twelve Days Of Chritmas (with The Andrews Sisters)
O Fir Tree Dark
Medley (Good King Wenceslas, We Three Kings of Orient Are, Angels We Have Heard On High)
I Heard The Bells On Christmas Day

Playing Time: 41 minutes
Tracks: 13

CD **BEAUTIFUL CHRISTMAS XBD CHRISTMAS CLASSICS MCA (SP) MSD 35463** **USA £5**

White Christmas
Medley:
(Deck The Halls
(Away In A Manger
(I Saw Three Ships
Santa Claus Is Comin' To Town
Adeste Fideles
Jingle Bells
Christmas In Killarney
Ave Maria
Medley:
(Good King Wenceslas
(We Three Kings Of Orient Are
(Angels We Have Heard On High
It's Beginning To Look Like Christmas
I'll Be Home For Christmas
The Christmas Song
Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer
The First Noel
God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen
Silent Night
Happy Holiday
Mele Kalikimaka
Twelve Days Of Christmas
I Heard The Bells On Christmas Day
Silver Bells

Playing Time: 58 minutes
Tracks: 21

All of the above CDs originated from the MCA stable and they are so similar in both sound and content — even to containing some of the same material — that they can be reviewed collectively. First it is necessary to explain 'MCA (SP)' which relates to the 'Special Products' Division of MCA. In actual fact, all three CDs are really special products although it seems that 'That Christmas Feeling' is only special inasmuch as it was specially issued for Christmas. The 'The Christmas Classics' CD has two release numbers but this is only one release. Obviously, the first number relates to those who commissioned the CD and the other relates to MCA. All these CDs have a very pleasant sound and they are all about the same price. If you like the material, pick and choose as you see fit. You won't be disappointed.

CD **MCA MCAD 31143 MERRY CHRISTMAS** **Australia**

Silent Night
Adeste Fideles
White Christmas
God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen
Faith Of Our Fathers
I'll Be Home For Christmas
Jingle Bells
Santa Claus Is Coming To Town
Silver Bells
It's Beginning To Look Like Christmas
Christmas In Killarney
Mele Kalikimaka

Playing Time: 34 minutes
Tracks: 12

Please refer to 'Thanks For The Memory' further on in this article where it will be seen that this is part of a special double CD release called 'Bing'. Until quite recently it has been available in Australia on the Rainbow label and it is currently available in the States and the UK, issued under the same number except that, in the UK, the release number is preceded by CMCAD on the inlay sheet. It is also available on Japanese MCA 32XD-511 but with two additional tracks: 'Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer' and 'The First Noel'. All issues are quality releases which should please anyone who does not already have this material.

CD **CREATIVE SOUNDS 4923 WHITE CHRISTMAS** **USA £4**

White Christmas
Adeste Fideles
Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer
O Little Town Of Bethlehem
Silent Night
Away In A Manger
Jingle Bells (with Gary Crosby)
That Christmas Feeling
Silent Night

Playing Time: 18 minutes
Tracks: 9

The material on this budget CD is identical to that on Pitz GR 80038 CD/CD 44 5457-2 which is also called 'White Christmas'. There is a difference. Here 'Silent Night' is heard twice . . . but it is a repeat of the same recording. The sound quality is not good!

CD **TEMPO DBCD 134 MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU** **Australia**

With Frank Sinatra
- Merry Christmas To You
- Jingle Bells
- Deck The Halls
- God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen
- Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
- O Come All Ye Faithful
- It Came Upon A Midnight Clear
- Away In A Manger
- O Little Town Of Bethlehem
- Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer
- Santa Claus Is Coming To Town
- White Christmas
- Adeste Fideles

(From TV Show 8/12/57)

With the Crosby Boys
- Jingle Bells
- That Christmas Feeling
- Hitch A Ride With Santa Claus
- The Snowman
- That Christmas Feeling
- Silent Night

(from Chesterfield Show 20/12/50)

NB. This CD is indexed at only two places separating the music as shown on this page

Playing Time: 54 minutes

Tracks: 20 (some combined as medleys)

This material has appeared before on LPs and CDs but never in really good sound. Here we have it in somewhat better sound. Some of the tracks are common to this and the previous CD. Those of you who like it will find more dialogue on this CD than is usual. More of a novelty than really good listening.

SNOWFLAKES Just little bits that may be of interest to you.

Duets with Frank Sinatra are available on the following CDs:

CD **DIGITAL DEJAVU 5-129-2 THE FRANK SINATRA CHRISTMAS COLLECTION** **Italy £8**

Hark The Herald Angels Sing — The Christmas Song

Playing Time: 31 minutes — Tracks: 12

CD **PILZ 445443-2 SANTA'S FAVOURITES** **USA**

Deck The Halls

Playing Time: 27 minutes — Tracks: 11

The last two CDs can be reviewed together as they are similar in many ways. Both have a very similar fairly good sound except for the Bing tracks which are poorer and very similar to the Tempo disc. Almost certainly some of the material is the same but this has not been checked. The Pilz CD lists only ten titles on the back inlay, the missing title being 'Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer' by Gene Autry.

CD **LASERLIGHT 15463 CHRISTMAS FAVORITES** **EEC & USA £5**

Happy Holiday — O Come All Ye Faithful

Playing Time: 28 minutes — Tracks: 11

Here the sound is good and although these two titles have appeared on other Laserlight CDs these appear to be different versions. Other tracks are by Dean Martin, Perry Como, Mel Torme, Buddy Clark, Dick Haymes, Dennis Day and Nelson Eddy making this quite an attractive budget CD.

PRIME CUTS
2 CDs **MCA MCAD 31375 BING** **Australia**
BOXED

Disc 1: MCAD-31143 MERRY CHRISTMAS (Already reviewed: see 'CHRISTMAS CRACKERS')

Disc 2: MCAD-31270 THANKS FOR THE MEMORY

- Swinging On A Star
- Where The Blue Of The Night
- Stardust
- I Got Plenty O' Nuttin'
- I'm An Old Cowhand
- I've Got A Pocketful Of Dreams
- You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby
- Sierra Sue
- New San Antonio Rose
- Easter Parade
- I'll Be Seeing You
- Moonlight Becomes You
- San Fernando Valley
- Don't Fence Me In
- The Road To Morocco
- Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral
- MacNamara's Band
- Galway Bay
- Dear Hearts And Gentle People
- Play A Simple Melody
- Harbour Lights
- Autumn Leaves
- Getting To Know You
- Around The World
- Thanks For The Memory

Disc Playing Time: 75 minutes — Tracks on Disc 2: 25

This is a limited edition boxed set — limited by the season. Almost certainly the two CDs will appear separately in the near future. Looking only at the second disc it must be obvious to most that all these tracks have been extracted from the 4 CD set 'His Legendary Years'. This can't be considered an alternative buy for the dedicated collector who perhaps cannot afford the larger set. Apart from the rejected master of 'I'll Be Seeing You' the real collectors' items have not been included. If not for the collector, why include this sub-standard version? Of course, the quality is excellent in both discs and the price is right — but why waste money on 'Merry Christmas', which you probably have already. Buy the 4 CD set instead as it will give you much more enjoyment.

2 CD **EMI 8142262 THE BING CROSBY COLLECTION** **Australia**

Disc 1: EMI 8142272

Please
Sweet & Lovely
Dancing In The Dark
This Is My Night To Dream
On The Sentimental Side
Try a Little Tenderness
Blue Hawaii
Sweet Leilani
Song Of The Islands
Goodnight Sweetheart
Black Moonlight
Too Marvellous For Words
I've Got The World On A String
A Ghost Of A Chance
Dinah
Sweet Georgia Brown
Pennies From Heaven
Still The Bluebird Sings
Maybe
Sing A Song Of Sunbeams

Playing Time: 61 minutes
Tracks: 20

Disc 2: EMI 8142282

Where The Blue Of The Night
How Deep Is The Ocean
Too Romantic
Sentimental & Melancholy
Temptation
Don't Be That Way
Stardust
Silver On The Sage
I'm An Old Cowhand
The Last Round-Up
The Funny Old Hills
Someday Sweetheart
Out Of Nowhere
Did You Ever See A Dream Walking?
An Apple For The Teacher
Brother Can You Spare A Dime
If You Should Ever Need Me
Down The Old Ox Road
Were You Sincere?
Thanks

Playing Time: 60 mintues
Tracks: 20

Here we have quite a mixed bag of early material, much of which has been issued quite recently. The sound is reasonably good but the main trouble is that the sound varies from track to track according to the source. There is reverberation on some tracks but not on others. Nevertheless this is good value for money.

2 CDs **COLUMBIA 474337 2 THE VINTAGE YEARS** **Australia**

CD 1: 474337 2
Did You Ever See A Dream Walking
I Guess It Had To Be That Way
Black Moonlight
Dinah
Just An Echo In The Valley
Beautiful Girl
After Sundown
We'll Make Hay While The Sun Shines
Temptation
Our Big Love Scene
Please
Here Lies Love
Learn To Croon
Moonstruck

Disc Playing Time: 43 minutes
Tracks: 14

CD 2: 474337 2
Down The Old Ox Road
Thanks
The Day You Came Along
Love Thy Neighbour
Once In a Blue Moon
Good Night, Lovely Little Lady
May I?
She Reminds Me Of You
Love In Bloom
I've Got The World On a String
A Ghost Of A Chance
How Deep Is The Ocean
St. Louis Blues
Sweet Georgia Brown

Disc Playing Time: 44 minutes
Tracks: 14

Here we have a much better sound but, like the preceding set, the songs have been taken from at least two very different sources, one with noticeable reverberation. Apart from this, the set is an excellent buy to fill some of the gaps in your CD collection.

CD **POINT 264249 THE MOST WELCOME GROANER — BING OF COURSE** **Canada**

My Heart Is Taking Lessons
East Side Of Heaven
On The Sentimental Side
This Is My Night To Dream
I Have Eyes
You've A Sweet Little Headache
An Apple For The Teacher

Playing Time: 35 minutes

I Haven't Time To Be A Millionaire
Medley Of Gus Edwards:
  Sunbonnet Sue
  Jimmy Valentine
  If I Was A Millionaire
Go Fly A Kite
Meet The Sun Half Way

Tracks: 12

There seems to be little *POINT* to this CD which is identical to Parade PAR 2021 (which was listed in the Christmas BING) except for the fact that eight tracks are missing. They both originated from Start Audio but they are issued in different countries. This is definitely a case of where 'British is Best'.

CD **PILZ 448212-2 DINAH** **Germany Budget**

Where The Blue Of The Night (A)
Sweet And Lovely
Dinah (B)
Shine
Sweet Georgia Brown (A)
Cabin In The Cotton
Some Of These Days
You're Beautiful Tonight My Dear
You're Getting To Be A Habit With Me (A)

Playing Time: 51 minutes

You've Got Me Crying Again
Temptation (A)
May I?
June In January (A)
With Every Breath I Take (A)
I'm and Old Cowhand
Mr Gallagher And Mr. Shean (E)
You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby (A)

Tracks: 17

It is truly amazing that this CD could suddenly appear from out of nowhere. It was found in a store selling surplus stock . . . and yet this was issued only in 1993! Equally strange, this CD was found a wrapped slimline double CD case. Is there a companion disc? The sound is remarkably good — some tracks very near perfect — and this is the rare version of 'Dinah' seldom found on a CD devoted only to Bing.

(Editor: This appears to be similar to the CD 'Bing's Best' — see BING 103 p. 42 — but three tracks are missing.)

CD CAS **GOLDEN OLDEN GORCD 101 A LITTLE BIT OF IRISH** **Ireland £13**

Molly Malone
Come Back To Erin
Galway Bay
Molly Malone
Isle of Innisfree
Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms (non Bing)
MacNamara's Band
When Irish Eyes Are Smiling
When You're Away
Ah! Sweet Mystery Of Life
Sweethearts
Thine Alone
Gypsy Love Song

I'm Falling In Love With Someone
Indian Summer
The Donovans
St. Patrick's Day Parade
Top O' The Mornin'
That Tumbledown Shack In Athlone
Dear Old Donegal
Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral
How Are Things In Glocca Morra?
KRAFT MUSIC HALL extract which Bing can be heard talking but only John McCormack sings

Playing Time: 70 minutes — Tracks: 28

First it is necessary to declare that the writer has made a small contribution towards the production of this CD which could account for a glowing review! But it is a good CD: in quality — with the exception of the John McCormack radio extract which qualifies for inclusion as being unusual, rare Irish material; in content — 9 tracks of TV material never before on record, 8 tracks from radio probably all new to record and 6 lovely commercial tracks. If you like this type of music you can buy with confidence. It is a must for the 'complete' Crosby collector.

GUEST APPEARANCES

The market is now flooded with different CDs that contain a track or two by Bing. Many are of little interest as the most popular titles are issued over and over again. However, there are others which are of interest as the material is difficult to get on CDs other than on these more obscure releases. Perhaps the most important are releases of non-commercial material (i.e. material that was not originally recorded for release to the public). These are considered first and to get in as much as possible in a limited space they are tabulated.

UK	**GI JUKE BOX HCD-2001 VOLUME 1**	Bless 'Em All
UK	**GI JUKE BOX HCD-2004 VOLUME 4**	I'll Get By

The above two CDs from a set of five can be bought separately. However, all the tracks in this set are from non-commercial sources and feature bands and vocalists from the late 30s and early 40s. Great sounds in good quality.

USA	**VINTAGE JAZZ VJC-1050 NEW YEARS EVE, 1944**	Swinging On A Star (with Music Maids and The Charioteers)
USA	**VINTAGE JAZZ VJC-1048 HOLLYWOOD STARS GO TO WAR**	San Fernando Valley
USA	**VINTAGE JAZZ VJC-1049 SENTIMENTAL SONGS OF W.W. II**	Sunday Monday & Always
Belgium	**DISKY DCD 5336 (2 CDs) THE BEST OF THE FANTASTIC 40s**	You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To (with Ginny Simms) San Fernando Valley A Little Bird Told Me

All of the above CDs are remarkable similar and in very good rather than perfect sound. Only the Belgium set has some somewhat later recordings. They are all recommended to anyone with a broad interest in the music of around World War II and certainly recommended to anyone seeking out some of the more unusual Bing tracks.

UK	**DOUBLE PLAY GRF 010 THE JAZZ SELECTION**	Cuanta La Gusto

Also with Peggy Lee but a different version to that on Parrot. It's also on JAZZ SINGERS BLN09 and ONN26 but almost certainly all three CDs are now deleted.

TRING TFP008 (4 CD set) 100 OF THE GREATEST LOVE SONGS	(Individually labelled as follows)
TRING VAR030 25 OF THE GREATEST LOVE SONGS Vol. 1	Come What May
TRING VAR032 25 OF THE GREATEST LOVE SONGS Vol. 4	Everything I Have Is Yours When The Red Roses Grow

Here the quality is far less satisfactory but all three titles can be found on DOUBLE PLAY GRF016 'EVERYTHING I HAVE IS YOURS' with 26 additional Bing tracks. This is now deleted but a few copies still remain at 'No. 66'.

FAMILIAR TRACKS

In the past year there have been many CDs released under the names of songwriters. Here are but a few of the more interesting releases.

UK	**MCA MCLD 19231**	**THE SONGS OF COLE PORTER**	Begin The Beguine Trust Your Destiny To A Star Rosalie Night And Day Don't Fence Me In
UK	**MCA MCLD 19232**	**THE SONGS OF HARRY WARREN**	The Legend Of Old California I'll Si Si Si Ya In Bahia
UK	**MCA MCLD 19233**	**THE SONGS OF IRVING BERLIN**	Anything You Can Do Blue Skies There's No Business Like Show Business
UK	**MCA MCLD 19234**	**THE SONGS OF RODGERS AND HAMMERSTEIN**	Some Enchanted Evening If I Loved You Getting To Know You
UK	**MCA MCLD 19235**	**THE SONGS OF JOHNNY MERCER**	In The Cool Cool Cool Of The Evening Dearly Beloved Ac-cent-tchu-ate The Positive Too Marvellous For Words

Although the above five CDs make a lovely set they are all available separately.

UK **MFP CD-DL 1248 (2 CD set)**
A TRIBUTE TO IRVING BERLIN
Disc 1 (7243 8 27748 2 1)

Disc 2: (7243 8 27750 2 7)

Fella With An Umbrella
Be Careful It's My Heart
Change Partners
White Christmas
Blue Skies
Play A Simple Melody
Anything You Can Do
But Not For Me
I Got Plenty O' Nuthin'
Love Walked In
Small Fry
Mr Gallagher And Mr Shean
Mister Meadowlark
On Behalf Of The Visiting Firemen
Moonlight Becomes You
Deep In The Heart Of Texas
White Christmas

UK **MCA MCLD 19206 CRAZY FOR GERSHWIN**

UK **CONIFER CDHD 203 JOHNNY MERCER**
PARDON MY SOUTHERN ACCENT

UK **ASV LIVING ERA HITS OF '42**
CD AJA 5103

There are, of course, dozen more releases of lesser importance which have been omitted. No doubt there are many more which have not been discovered. Club work does severely restrict the number of visits to the shops and so your information is becoming more and more important. Sincere thanks to all of you who have helped in the past. Time has not always allowed proper acknowledgement.

There is just one CD, kept to the end, so that the exit will be in a blaze of light — well maybe a twinkle.

UK **STARDUST STADD 1000 STARS AT CHRISTMAS**
(2 CD set) Disc 1 STARDUST STACD 500

Disc 2 STARDUST STACD 501

White Christmas
Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer
Adeste Fidelis
Silent Night

Produced by Wisepack, it is a far better product than that of the previous year. The sound is good as all the tracks have been licensed from the major companies but its attraction lies, not only in picture labels, but also in the box which features a cardboard flap which lifts up to reveal a 3D Christmas scene which portrays all the stars featured on the CDs and at the back there is a Christmas tree illuminated with three flashing lights. These still work after some three months, working off a small hearing aid type battery. It's such a pity that this could not be reviewed in the last BING as it will be extremely difficult to find a set now.

Derek Parkes

Mitch Miller and BING

Ted Burnell's letter in the last BING about Mitch Miller directing the Orchestra and Chorus on the 'How Lovely Is Christmas' album surprisingly brought no response whatsoever from our experts but by chance I came across reference to the matter in an earlier edition of BING. In BING 28 (Christmas 1972), the then Editor (John Bassett) had spotted the same discrepancy and he wondered if the error of quoting Arthur Norman as the Musical Director had come about because Norman had been involved on the companion Golden LP issued that year. He decided to credit the accompaniment to Mitch Miller from henceforth and he suggested that owners of the "At To Z Of Bing Crosby" should amend their copies accordingly.

The issue surfaced again in BING 29 when John asked for comment from members and an answer came in BING 30 from Fred Reynolds who said:-

"The exact date of recording has not, to my knowledge, been ascertained but two albums were released in October 1957 and the other two in February 1958. Discounting your suggestion that Norman and Miller may be one and the same person (although we know that pseudonyms are sometimes used) it is feasible that there might have been at least two recording sessions and possibly two orchestras. According to label credits, however, Arthur Norman directed the orchestra for "Ali Baba And The 40 Thieves", "Never Be Afraid" and "Jack B Nimble." My copy of the last named album gives no credit for the musical direction for the Bing side, but the reverse side ("The Candlestick Suite") is featured by the Golden Chamber Orchestra under the direction of Arthur Norman. In view of this, therefore, it becomes less likely that another director would be used for "A Christmas Story — An Axe, An Apple And A Buckskin Jacket" but it is a possibility."

Presumably a decision was then made to accept that Arthur Norman *had* provided the accompaniment to Bing on Golden LP-121. We await volume 4 of Fred's "The Crosby Collection" for an update but if anyone else cares to contribute in the meantime we shall be glad to hear from them.

OH, WHAT IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN!

Bill Robertson had worked for Australian EMI for 45 years, and with his influence we saw some interesting Bing CD's released on the AXIS label, most notably BING SWINGS IT and THAT TRAVELLIN' TWO-BEAT. Bill also authorised the re-issue of I WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS and would have included "Do You Hear What I Hear?" and "Christmas Dinner Country Style" had he been alerted to their existence just a bit earlier. But that was a minor loss compared to what followed.

Bill was receptive to collectors' suggestions, which led him to planning 3 more Bing releases at that time. They were an untitled CD combining the HOLIDAY IN EUROPE and IN A LITTLE SPANISH TOWN LPs; COUNTRY CROSBY, a 24 track compilation including "You Don't Know What Lonesome Is", "Shepherd Serenade", "Don't Ever Be Afraid to Go Home", etc; and FOR LOVE ALONE, 24 tracks including the title, "The Kiss in Your Eyes", "I Love You", etc. Another two discs to feature all the French and all the Irish songs were also proposed.

Until then EMI had paid a 10% royalty for the Decca tracks, but when master tapes of the track listings for the 3 discs was requested from the U.S., MCA advised that the royalty would now be 15%. As the planned issues were on the budget label, this 50% increase in royalties was sufficient for EMI to feel they would not be profitable and to see them scrapped.

EMI then decided it would pay an independent producer to compile out-of-copyright material, the discs of which they would have pressed and distributed. This new direction has seen several Bing CDs by KCP Productions released by EMI including BLUE HAWAII. Because the source material comes from private collections, it has meant some compromise in track content and quality.

But EMI retain the Capitol catalogue, and Bill Robertson looked here for more Bing. The first release was CLASSIC CROSBY VOLUME 2 featuring a dozen or so of the singalong tracks. A second singalong disc (Volume 1) was suggested comprising the ON THE HAPPY SIDE LP tracks plus the previously unreleased sessions of June 1962 including "Together", "If I Didn't Care", "Wishing", etc. The Capitol archives were culled and the original orchestral backing tracks (which these tapes revealed were recorded in March 1962 by The Ivan Raymond Chorus) were located. Australian EMI was charged a $40 fee for this service, and as a further excursion into the Capitol archives to retrieve Bing's vocals would incur additional charges, Bill Robertson determined that the expense was not justified and proceeded no further.

EMI now seems to be undergoing a period of soul-searching and re-focusing on future direction which has seen 100 proposed CD issues, including 2 of Bing's, put on indefinite hold.

Bill Robertson retired towards the end of 1993 and the Bing compilations which would have been a boon to the collectors came to nothing.

David Currington

(Editor: I hope Leslie Gaylor reads this. Start writing to Capitol, Leslie, and see if you can get those missing sing-a-long tracks issued! Might be a nice issue for EMI in the UK.)

RHYTHM ON THE RANGE

RHYTHM seems to be a theme in this issue and it's good to have a contribution from our old friend, Jim Newell, as he tells us . . .

Research is a funny game.

The above film I suppose comes under the description of 'Western Genre' so hands up (hands up, oh never mind) all those who remember Leonard Slye? He was in the above film with Bing Crosby.

Leonard Slye and the Sons of the Pioneers were in the background of many of Gene Autrey's films. It appears that like Monroe, Garland and others there were times when Autry would storm off the set in a rage and sometimes would not make a film at all.

What's this got to do with the above Bing film? Follow me. Most of Autry's films were made at/on 'Gower Gulch', this was the fun name given to a particular film lot at Columbia.

Over on the Paramount lot they were getting ready to make the above film and I would remind you this was early 1936.

I remind you of the date because Dick Weston and the Sons of the Pioneers, oh sorry, didn't I tell you Leonard Slye had changed his name to Dick Weston.

But hang on, what's this? Early in **1938** as he had done in the past, Autry went on strike again leaving Dick Weston and The Sons of the Pioneers without work yet again.

After a panic conference meeting with the Top Brass of Republic Studios, Sol Siegel called Dick Weston into his office and told him he was to be the 'Lead Actor' in the Republic film "Under Western Skies" but they had a problem as they felt that the name 'Dick Weston' was not a STAR name.

Quoting Dick himself — "There were several people in the office, Sol and Moe Siegel, Mr. Yeates and myself — we kicked several names around until Rogers came up, I said, I liked the name as I've always liked Will Rogers. So we stopped at Rogers then started looking for a short first name, finally they hit on Roy, I liked it — and so Leonard Slye/Dick Weston became Roy Rogers —." But hang on a minute, this all happened in 1938, 18 months AFTER the above film was made, so why write about it?

If the name of Roy Rogers was not "born" until 1938 and the film we are talking about was made in 1936, how come in Fred Reynold's book "THE ROAD TO HOLLYWOOD" we find listed, The Sons of The Pioneers **including ROY ROGERS**. Should it not have read just "The Sons of The Pioneers" as Dick (ROY) was at this time just part of the group and ROY was to come in the future.

Further proof, if proof was needed is a photograph taken from the 1936 film "THE BIG SHOW" which shows the backing group behind Autry very clearly and whats more, naming them all and yes, you've guessed it, in a large black hat is LEONARD SLYE. If you have a copy of the film "RHYTHM ON THE RANGE" you will not see the name ROY ROGERS appear.

It is of interest to note that critics of the time (1938) said it was the only "Prestige" film of the year that the "Sons of the Pioneers" had appeared in and that film was "UNDER WESTERN SKIES" with ROY ROGERS as star billing. This was the FIRST Roy Rogers film.

I find no reference to any of the above in the "Road" book. **IF** by putting "The Sons of The Pioneers" and them "(including Roy Rogers)" in brackets was meant to mean that he was in fact PART of the "Sons" group (which of course he was), I find that unless you know about the foregoing, to see Roy Rogers name in 1936 could cause questions to be asked, as I did, and now I hope I have answered.

Please note, all of the abbve is not a knock at "Fred's book, for a start his book has pride of place on my Bing book shelf relating to Bing's films.

I find research is a very interesting subject when it's regarding Bing's life and times. Fred wrote to me once in fact when I received his book and the letter is still with it in which he says that if anything crops up over the years which is of interest regarding Bing etc then I am to let people know and not keep it to myself, so that is why we have the above.

I've said it before and now say it again, research is a funny game.

Jim Newell

(Editor: It is appreciated that a reference to Leonard Slye/Dick Weston in "Road to Hollywood" would have held little interest whilst the name of Roy Rogers is more significant. We full understand Fred's motives in referring to Roy Rogers but nevertheless we feel that Jim's research will be of interest to members.)

A New Bing Film?

We recently received an extract from the Movies Unlimited catalogue (see Trading Post) and we were surprised to see reference to Bing being mentioned as a guest star in a film called "College Swing" which starred Bob Hope. The film is advertised as:

College Swing (1938)
An all-star cast featured in this musical comedy in which Gracie Allen inherits a small-town school and proceeds to turn it into a hangout for her vaudeville friends. Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, Martha Raye, Betty Grable and, of course, George Burns are among the students of the 'new curriculum'. Songs include 'I Fall In Love With You Everyday' and 'You're A Natural.' (86 min.). $14.99.

This was a new one to me so I turned to our film expert, Keith Parkinson for advice. Keith's response was as follows:-

"College Swing" (released as 'Swing, Teacher, Swing' in the UK) was put out by Paramount in 1938 when Bing was a major box office attraction. It seems unlikely that Paramount would have found a part for Bing in the movie and then avoided mentioning the fact. The most reliable detailed Filmography for Bob Hope appeared in the magazine 'Focus On Film' over 20 years ago and Bing does not feature in the credits. It would be easy however to verify any Crosby contribution by viewing the video now available in the States, so let's hope that by the next issue of BING we've had a positive sighting. It would be nice to expand the list of Bing's films."

Thanks, Keith for your thoughts and if anyone obtains the video from Movies Unlimited, please let us know the answer. It is probably unlikely that Bing appears in the picture, but you never know.

What The Papers Say

Some miscellaneous items seen in recent months. Jack Tinker in the Daily Mail tells of writing to Bing as a youngster and my only comment is that it must have been at the height of Bing's popularity when his office dealt with much of his correspondence. We are all aware of how thoroughly Bing dealt with letters that reached him. The letter about Whitney Houston comes from the Kettering Evening Telegraph and must have been written by one of our members (who do we know in the Kettering area?). Ken Heason sent us the cutting from Greenpeace magazine about Bing Crosby ice cream (it was just a display, it wasn't for sale).

Bing stays at the top

IN YOUR People In The News feature *(January 11)* **you stated that Whitney Houston's song I Will Always Love You, had become the top selling single of all time, with nearly five million copies sold in America and ten million worldwide.**

May I refer you to the Guinness Book of Records. Bing Crosby's original version of White Christmas sold 170,884,207 between 1942 and 1987 in North America alone.

In a recent article, Peter Cakanic states that the record industry gives a sales figure of over one billion for Bing Crosby's total sales. Bing recorded over 2,000 songs in his lifetime, with many of them becoming multi-million sellers.

He started recording in 1926 and recorded his last song three days before his death in 1977.

Since then, over 2,000 songs recorded for his radio shows have been found in the vaults of radio stations in America and are now being released to the public.

I have no point to make, just interested, as Whitney Houston's sales of ten million for one single is not bad going.

JUST INTERESTED
(Name and address supplied)

Jack Tinker

SO I WAS far more circumspect when I wrote to Bing Crosby in Hollywood. I named all the films in which I had seen him (so he would know that no one else was receiving duplicate fan mail) and added a short resume of my own incident-ridden career in Miss Taylor's Class 3. Bing replied almost immediately, enclosing a magnificent 8in by 10in studio portrait of himself. And I shall never forget his letter.

'Dear Friend,' it began in grown-up typing. 'I have been enjoying a holiday fishing with my old friend Bob Hope . . .' And on it went, with the most intimate (to me) details of his idyllic rural life in Tinsel Town. Naturally, being well brought up, I sat down straight away to thank him. Bing Crosby was my new penfriend — didn't his letter confirm this in its opening line: 'Dear Friend'?

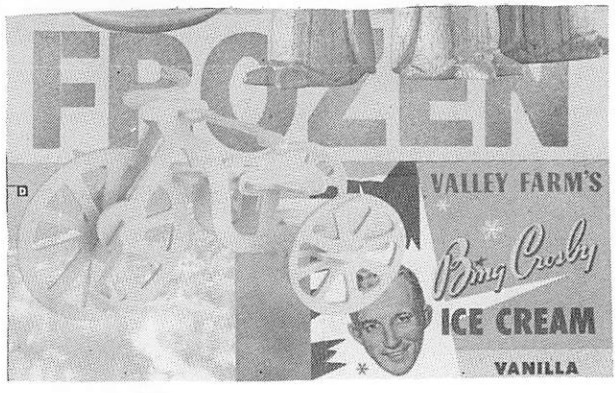
Well, what are friends for? I expanded on my life at St Paul's Church of England Primary School, Royton. Confidentially, I also complained bitterly that Miss Taylor had criticised my abstract pattern painting for its daring theme of blue and green. 'Blue and green should never be seen,' she had told me scathingly.

I sought his views on this vexatious subject, as a sometime screen priest. Didn't God Himself put green and blue together wherever you looked? I wrote with all the theological indignation at an eight-year-old's command. Words I would never have dared to speak out loud to the pagan Miss Taylor, of course.

Back came his reply. Another magnificent studio portrait — identical to the one presiding over the table next to my bed. And another letter, too.

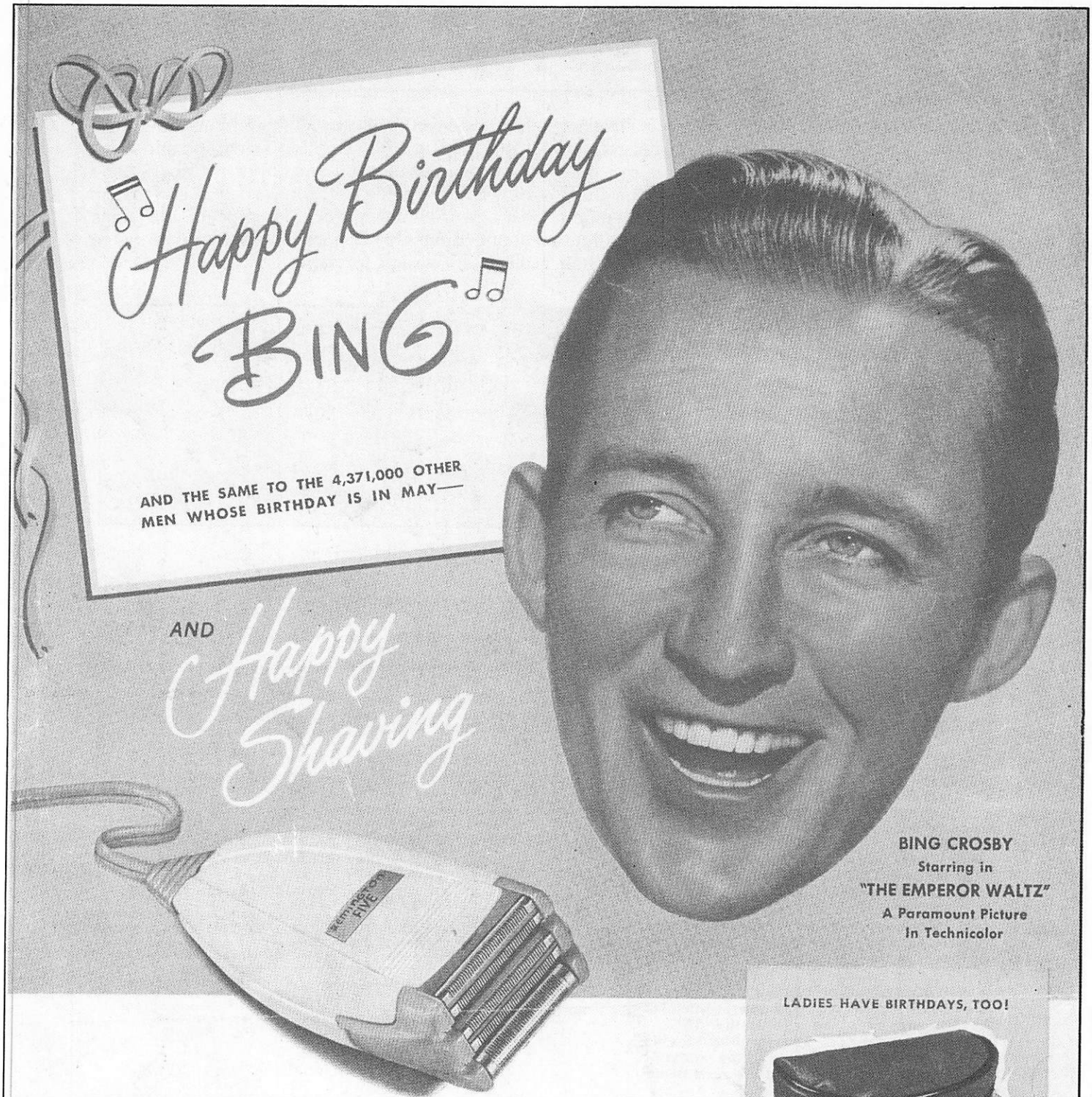
'Dear Friend,' it began, 'I have been enjoying a holiday fishing with my old friend Bob Hope . . .'

Well, you don't need to have the rest spelt out, do you? Needless to say, I have never written to a film star from that day to this and won't ask for autographs, not even for my housekeeper's daughter.



Copy Date for next Edition — 15 June 1994

All material to the Editor



BING CROSBY
Starring in
"THE EMPEROR WALTZ"
A Paramount Picture
In Technicolor

You'll have *both* a happy birthday and happy shaving when you receive a Remington Electric Shaver for your birthday. With the new Remington you'll enjoy an easy-on-the-face, close, long-lasting shave!

No other modestly-priced gift combines the fine personal, masculine qualities of a Remington—a gift that brings him daily shaving pleasure, an aid to better grooming, a gift just for him.

TO THE FAMILY: Why not surprise Dad on his birthday or Father's Day—with a Remington FIVE—it's a five star bet for *every* gift occasion. Beautifully packaged!

Remington Five (illustrated), $21.50. Foursome, $19.50. Triple, $17.50. 6V-110V Auto-Home, $25.50. AC-DC.

For Remington Owners: The new Blue Streak heads give faster, cleaner shaves and trim sideburns and mustache evenly. We'll place one on your present model while you wait—$3.50 at any of Remington's 97 Shaver Headquarters.

SHAVES DRY • NO LATHER • NO BLADES

Remington

ELECTRIC SHAVERS

LADIES HAVE BIRTHDAYS, TOO!

And when they do—the new Lady's Shaver by Remington, designed especially for tender feminine skin, makes an ideal gift. It will please your wife, mother, daughter, or girl friend. $15.00. AC-DC. At all leading stores.

REMINGTON RAND INC., ELECTRIC SHAVER DIVISION, BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT . . . A PRODUCT OF Remington Rand